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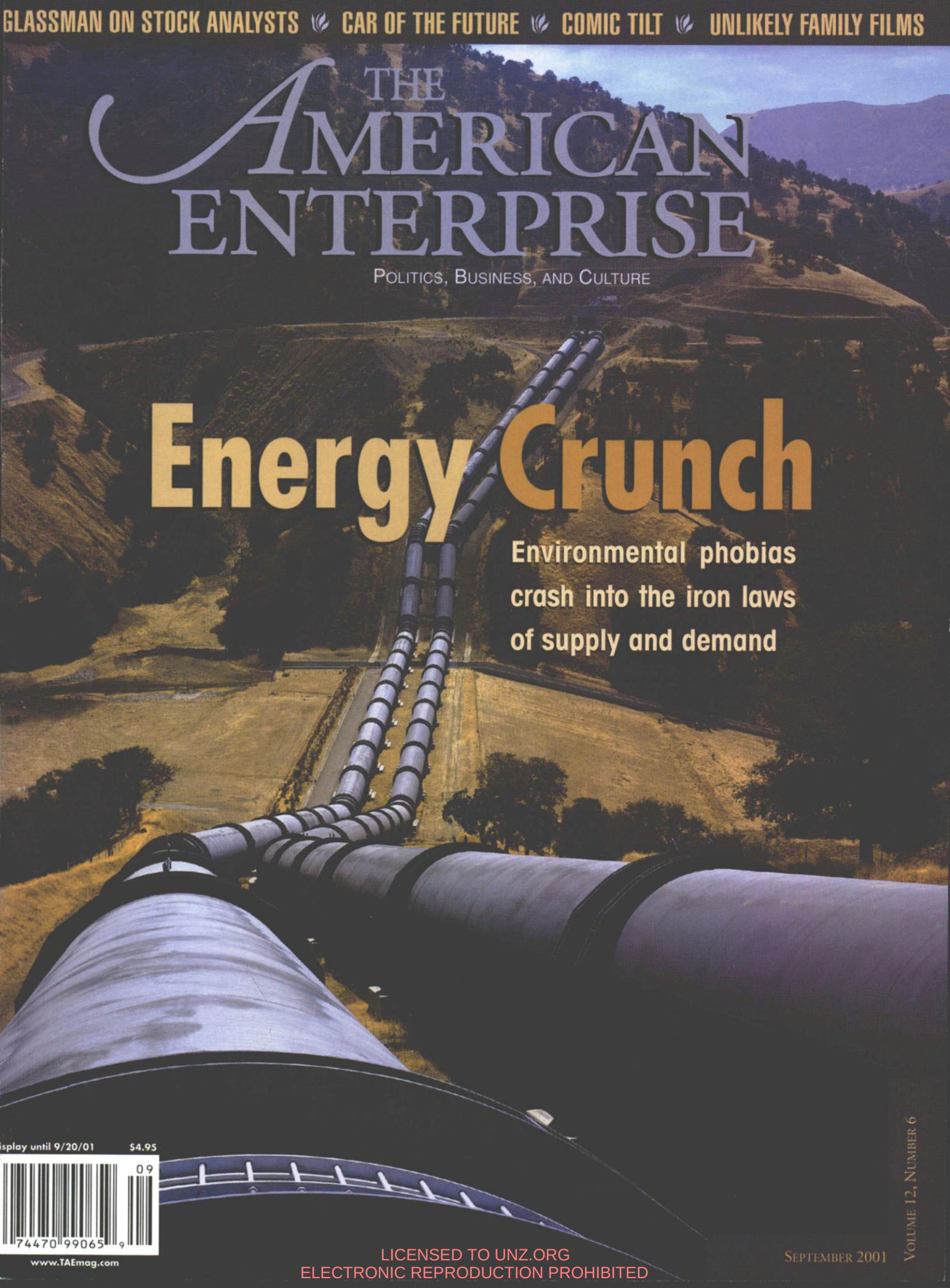

Energy Crunch

Environmental phobias crash into the iron laws of supply and demand

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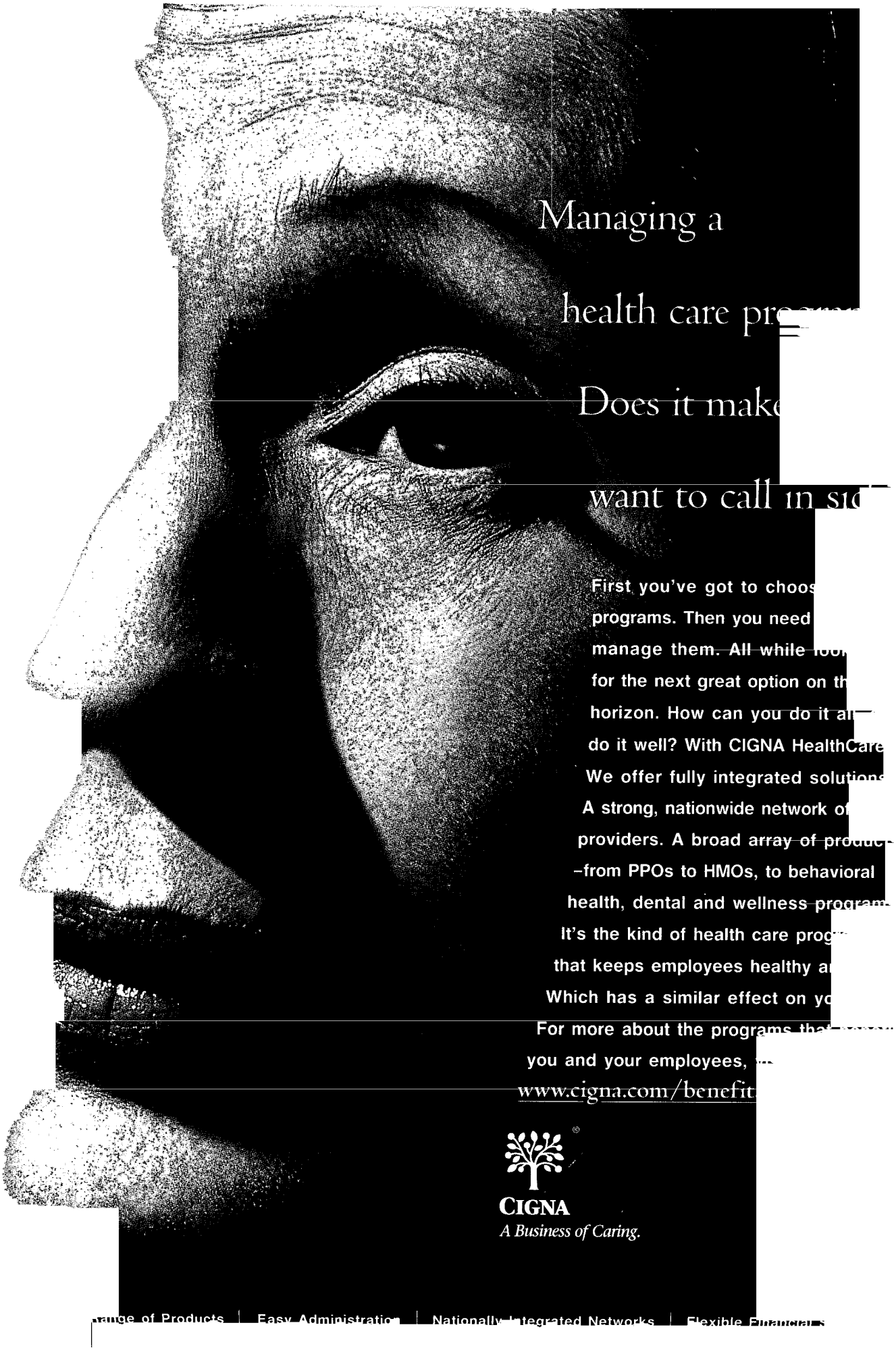

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...to a sounder climate policy

Most people acknowledge that human-induced climate change is a long-term risk. And it is by now becoming better understood that the Kyoto Protocol approach would be a serious mistake. But if not Kyoto, what?

Central to any future policy should be the understanding that man-made greenhouse gas emissions arise from essential energy use in the everyday activities of people, governments and businesses. Consequently, efforts to control emissions have important economic and social consequences. In our view, the most effective way to respond to all concerns and risks is through programs that encourage *economically justified near-term actions*, and that *promote climate understanding* and *technological innovation for long-term solutions*.

Efforts to control emissions have important economic and social consequences

Here are some concrete proposals:

Encourage voluntary actions. These would include management systems for energy efficiency, cost-effective investments such as cogeneration in manufacturing and energy efficiency in businesses and homes. These suggestions are much more than empty words. In ExxonMobil's case, we have installed over 2,300 megawatts of cogeneration capacity, which typically reduces energy use by at least 30 percent.

Promote carbon storage through protection and expansion of forests and emphasis on soil management, such as no-till agriculture.

Focus international efforts on a framework that supports technology transfer and information sharing. Encouraging open markets, freer investment flows and protection of intellectual property embodied in technology would accelerate the commercialization and global spread of energy-efficient technologies.

Conduct scientific research to improve society's ability to predict possible consequences (positive as well as negative) of future climate change. Programs should concentrate on factors that seriously limit current understanding. These include the effects of clouds, aerosols, sea ice, deep-ocean circulation, hydrology and natural climate variability. We also need to improve the monitoring of climate.

Realistically appraise and address barriers to renewable energy (wind, solar) and nuclear energy. Although each has potential to help meet energy demand without adding to greenhouse emissions, they face serious technical, marketplace and political barriers.

Undertake research on promising long-term technological options. For example, we are involved with automobile companies in joint research that could significantly reduce future emissions by using fuel cells powered by hydrogen from advanced gasoline. Other possibilities include clean-coal technology for electricity generation; separation and storage of CO_2 emissions; and geoengineering to remove carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere.

These suggestions share some common characteristics. They are designed to include practical near-term steps, while at the same time they encourage the development of long-term technical solutions. They avoid regulatory straitjackets and invite participation by all nations. Because they are flexible, policies can change as experience and knowledge are gained.

This approach also offers the opportunity for all companies, the scientific community and governments to work together on a climate policy that makes sense for the future.

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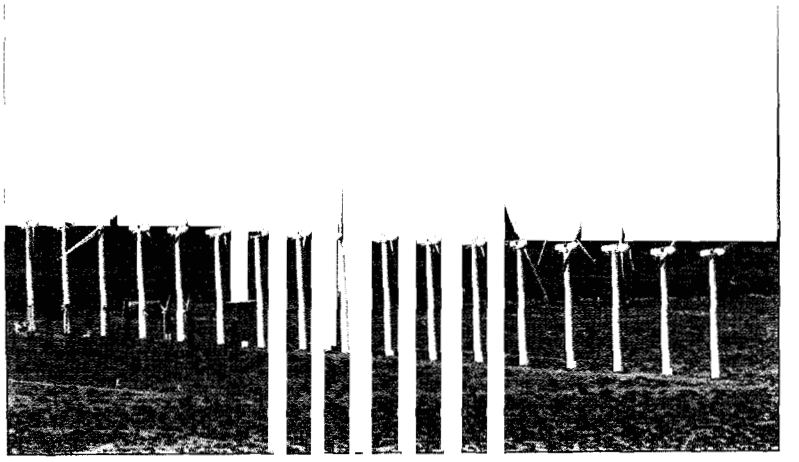

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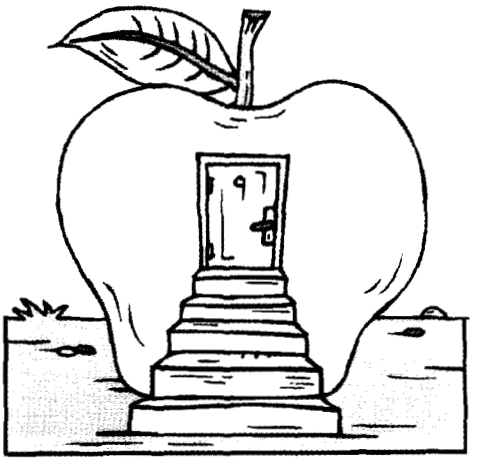

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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

Beware of Green Fairy Tales

Ah, politics. Even before President Bush unveiled his energy initiative earlier this summer, his opposition went into attack mode. House minority leader Richard Gephardt and Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe thundered into cameras about how scandalously little George Bush cares about conserving resources. They all but demanded the White House cooks wash and reuse the Saran wrap they peel off casseroles at state dinners. What Americans really need, they insisted, is tougher controls on consumption of energy—like stricter gas-mileage requirements for their cars.

And in what did these super-conservers roll up to their news conferences? Well, Mr. Gephardt tools around in a 5,760 pound Chevy Suburban mega-SUV (maybe he has to bring lots of kids to soccer practice on the way to and from work?), while man-of-the-people Terry McAuliffe travels in a Cadillac Escalade SUV, which differs from a Mack 18-wheeler only in lacking a CB and a bulldog emblem at the end of its hood. McAuliffe's fuel usage as he bops from D.C. photo op to photo op: maybe 10-12 miles per gallon.

Before they got spooked by political attacks, the Bushies actually made a very intelligent distinction on conservation. "The aim here is efficiency, not austerity," said Dick Cheney. Indeed. If conserving resources was all we cared about, we would set people to scratching the labels off beer bottles so the paper could be recycled.

We could save oceans of fuel by banning travel at speeds higher than 30 mph, by closing down the electron-sucking Internet, by mandating reuse of every scrap of string and aluminum foil, by ending helicopter airlifts of injured children to trauma centers. But clearly our goal is something other than simple energy saving.

Energy is nothing but an activator, a power source, a substitute for nastier alternatives like lots of backbreaking human labor. Using less energy is good only if it can be done without creating a stiff penalty in another area. It often consumes *more* energy and creates *more* pollution to save, collect, truck, sanitize, shred, remanufacture, dry, and reprint, say, old pizza boxes than it would to simply make new ones. In those cases we should toss that cardboard in the landfill—it's the rational, eco-friendly choice!

Though they are often suckers for environmentalist rhetoric, in their behavior most Americans understand this critical distinction. (Do *you* peel the paper labels off your bottles?) And contrary to much propaganda, Americans are not mindless wasters. I'm currently staring at two dramatic graphs from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The first shows that per capita energy use in the U.S. is not a smidgen higher today than it was in the early 1970s. And of course we're producing and doing a lot more now than we did in the '70s, so the second graph shows that our energy usage *per dollar of economic output* is actually dramatically *lower* than it was a generation ago. Today, we use only about 10,000 BTUs of energy to produce each dollar of GDP—down from more than 18,000 BTUs in 1970. Even as our lives became fuller and more productive, the free market's constant search for efficiencies (after all, they increase profit) made us stretch every BTU further.

Working with, rather than against, free markets is critical to any intelligent energy plan. The two strengths of the Bush-Cheney energy proposals are that they are economically clear-eyed and aimed at long term solutions, not cheap short-term effects (see pp. 16-19). The administration's plans recognize that at the heart of

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today's energy crunch are supply and demand imbalances. In resisting California Governor Gray Davis's demand for government price controls, the President noted that artificially holding down prices *increases* demand, and *decreases* supply—thus worsening the problem over the long run.

It's not profligacy that drives our need for new energy. It's progress.

The stark reality is that efforts to expand our energy supplies have repeatedly been blocked of late. It's been 25 years since a major oil refinery was built in the U.S. Meanwhile, 37 have had to close just since 1992, so those remaining are running flat out to keep up (barely) with fuel demand. Likewise, our newest nuclear electricity plant was ordered in 1973. New York state has not approved a major electric-generating plant of any sort since the late 1980s. California (which grew much faster in population) was even stupider: no new generating stations commissioned by the state Public Utilities Commission since 1980. The U.S. is now so short of electricity plants it's estimated that 1,300 to 1,900 will have to be built over the next 20 years to catch up.

For a couple of decades, regulators, under the influence of environmentalists, have just said "No" to efforts to expand our energy supply. No new plants. No new refineries. No new drilling. No new exploration on public land. We got away with it for a while, as our markets substituted different supplies, increased efficiency and conserved, and brought in imports instead. But there are limits.

The U.S. is now home to 75 million more people than in 1970. And each of us lives better—our houses and schools and hospitals are bigger, we travel more, a huge range of new electronic devices make us safer and richer (while also requiring power). The result: Despite making our refrigerators, light bulbs, and other devices 30 to 50 percent more efficient, our total electricity consumption has increased 60 percent since 1980. Over the next ten years, it is expected to increase by another 25 percent.

Before you agonize over what sort of awful behavior is causing this increased consumption (air conditioned dog kennels?), consider the new electronic world we live in. A computer manufacturing facility now consumes as much power as some steel mills (which is why electricity demand in Silicon Valley, and other high-tech centers, is growing at triple the California-wide rate). And keeping all those powerful computers and other electronics plugged in after they're manufactured requires even more juice. As much as 15 percent of all U.S. electricity is now used to manufacture and then run computers. Fully 8 percent of our power output is consumed just by activities related to the Internet, and increasing Internet use is estimated to be responsible for more than half of today's growth in electricity demand. Sending a 2 megabyte e-mail consumes a pound of coal or five ounces of oil, all told.

So it's not porkish greed or immoral profligacy that drives our need for new energy. It's just progress. But the requirements are real, and unduckable, and they need to be met through fresh supplies.

Despite what you may hear, we are not running out of energy. Over the 15-year period 1985-2000, for instance, U.S. natural gas reserves grew from about 300 trillion cubic feet to more than 2,000 trillion cubic feet. The problem is, inflamed by years of environmentalist alarmism, the American public is increasingly allergic to any effort to bring new gas, or other energy resources, to market. (See the stories on pp. 28-38.)

The most serious blockages are on public land—which is where our richest deposits lie. The U.S. Minerals Management Service estimates that the federally owned U.S. outer continental shelf contains at least 46 billion barrels of undiscovered oil, and 268 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Nearly all of this treasure trove (worth trillions of dollars) has been placed off-limits to drilling on environmentalist grounds. Only 2 percent of our continental shelf has been leased for energy development.

Inland, the same pattern holds. Fully 40 percent of the natural gas on federal land in the Rocky Mountains has already been locked away for one reason or another. Overall, a U.S. Department of Energy advisory panel estimates that drilling restrictions in the lower 48 states have blocked access to enough natural gas to meet the country's entire needs for a full decade. In Alaska, where less than 1 percent of the land is privately owned and available for energy development, additional vast resources are closed off.

Environmentalists like to say they're not against energy development, that it's just this *one* precious/wild/irreplaceable/holy piece of "American Serengeti" that they're trying to "save." But the truth is, it *isn't* just one place. It's here, there, and everywhere. They use one argument to cordone off the Rockies, and another objection against tapping Lake Erie deposits. "Save the caribou!" works great to stop projects in Alaska. In the desert, rats and moths are invoked to halt exploration. Rich people with beach houses are rallied against offshore development. Just in the last few weeks, politicians have fenced off the vast Great Lakes region and much of the Florida Gulf in knee-jerk reactions. Put all these case-by-case alarmisms together, and nearly *every* place ends up out of bounds for energy production.

Even on an individual basis, environmentalist objections against energy development are often patent nonsense. Not far from my home lies the Finger Lakes National Forest. Despite the rather grand name, there is nothing pristine about this area—it is a patchwork of old farms that were abandoned during the Depression and scooped up by the Feds, now slowly growing back to woodland. It is pretty, and a place I enjoy hiking, but far from a virgin wilderness. There is no reason whatever why a few wells couldn't be sunk within its boundaries to extract the natural gas that has been discovered beneath the surface, without disrupting other uses of the land. The resulting royalties would even allow the U.S. Forest Service to do a better job taking care of the acreage and trails. But Green absolutists have made it sound like placing a few wellheads amidst the old pastures and farmlanes would be the equivalent of attaching a water slide to Old Faithful. (We photographed one of their protests, see page 28.) Backed by Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, opponents are in the process of banning any exploration.

A particularly damaging example of environmentalist irrationality, alas now mostly shared by the public, concerns offshore drilling. In watching the news shows, one's nat-

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ural impression is that rigs at sea are fundamentally incompatible with ocean purity, marine health, and clean beaches. Nothing could be further from the truth. Offshore rigs are not new—for 60 years, oil and gas drilling has taken place over water in this country. We currently have 4,500 offshore platforms, supplying 10 percent of the oil and 25 percent of the natural gas we'll use this year. Offshore rigs provide our nation with approximately the same amount of energy as we burn in coal.

There is nothing unproven or unsafe about drilling into the outer continental shelf. Naturally occurring oil seeps add about 150 times as much oil to the oceans as offshore drilling does. And for the two-thirds of all offshore rigs that produce gas rather than oil, there is no crude to leak.

It's significant that most of those 4,500 successfully operating platforms are located within America's richest marine-life zones. More than half a century of drilling has done no harm to Louisiana's fishery, which produces over a billion pounds of commercial seafood per year. Indeed, some of the best sportfishing in the country takes place directly around the oil rigs, which function as artificial reefs so attractive to ocean creatures that fishermen seek trophy mounts there. (Canadians likewise successfully produce huge quantities of offshore energy right amidst the teeming fisheries and tourist coastlines of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.)

Many oil and gas wells have been drilled and continue to be drilled, right in official wildlife refuges. In Louisiana alone, 1,605 wells have been sunk in refuges, including fragile wetlands home to migratory birds, shrimp, crab, alligators, fur-bearing animals, and many fish. For decades, wildlife preservation and petroleum extraction have very successfully taken place in parallel. Indeed, even environmental organizations like the Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy have allowed wells to be drilled in refuges they run privately. So much for the fundamental incompatibility of animals and drilling.

A true irony is that if we don't allow offshore drilling, we'll have to import that much more oil. Imported oil arrives via ocean tankers—in tens of thousands of shipments each year. And it so happens that these tankers pose, statistically, a much greater threat of spills and ecological damage than drilling. So even the shorebirds and marine mammals and beachfront business owners would be safer with offshore wells, though no one seems to recognize this.

Equally irrational superstitions block other elements of energy development. Activists often quail, for instance, at the prospect of having a pipeline built through their area. They present the pipes as frail, dangerous disasters waiting to happen. In truth, pipelines are utterly routine parts of the fabric of modern life. There are currently *two million miles* of oil pipelines in the U.S. Having a pipeline in your town is less dangerous than hosting a grain elevator. So next time you sit down to a bowl of oatmeal or cornflakes, ask yourself whether the slight chance of a grain dust explosion, or an aflatoxin outbreak, means that porridge-making should be demonized, as energy production routinely is now.

Let's take that oatmeal versus petroleum comparison a little further. No sensible person would argue that energy production is a pristine undertaking. It's heavy industry. But then most of our daily lives are now founded on heavy industry. Have you ever been in a factory that makes granola? Full of huge machinery, burning roasters, conveyor belts, and bulky waste products.

What do you think the bowels of Birkenstock sandal production look like? The process originates with the killing of hundreds of animals for their hides. The hides only become useable leather after the application of many strong chemicals. The cork soles begin with the chainsawing of large tropical trees. The rubber bottoms are, gasp, a petroleum product. The metal buckles require open-pit iron ore mines in Minnesota or elsewhere. Massive hydraulic presses stamp out all the pieces, consuming energy, and producing waste oil. And the cobbler's glues and nylon threads that hold everything together are made from potent chemicals. Ah, the simple joys of a natural product.

If you are logical, and fair, you will realize that modern energy production is generally no more villainous than other industrial processes that we completely take for granted. Take that ultimate P.C. product, Ben & Jerry's ice cream, the favorite nectar of left-wing Green avengers. It's made in a big, industrial factory—full of pipes and oily machinery and electricity-guzzling, chemical-refrigerant freezers (see photo). It looks a *lot* like the oil processing plants we visited on Alaska's North Slope.

And think about what takes place outside the plant. It takes four gallons of milk to make a gallon of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. In the process of making that much milk, a cow will also produce about eight gallons of manure, and another 8 gallons of methane (one of the most potent "greenhouse" gases), while consuming a large amount of water plus three pounds of grain and hay (which in turn has to be produced with tractor fuel, chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides, and transported with truck or train fuel). So every time he digs into his Cherry Garcia, the conscientious environmentalist should visualize (in addition to world peace) a pile of grain, water, farm chemicals, and energy inputs much bigger than his ice cream bowl to one side of the table, and, on the other side of the table, a mound of manure eight times the size of his bowl, plus a balloon of methane that would barely fit under the dining room table. (That oughta dampen Ben & Jerry's sales.)

Am I trying to make you feel guilty for eating ice cream? Emphatically no. My point is that there is no free lunch—or free dessert. All forms of production involve inputs and waste products and side effects. You can't make a pint of vanilla without breaking some eggs, one might say. It's unreasonable to focus obsessively on the downsides of energy production without acknowledging that *every* undertaking has downsides and upsides.

The complete picture on energy often looks quite different from the pipe dreams sketched by environmental absolutists. Consider windmills. Forget the fact that the cost of wind-generated electricity is *double* the cost of fossil-fuel generated power. Forget that wind power is also less reliable and subject to interruption. Let's just focus on factors that environmentalists favor. First, landscape disruption: As environmental writer Roderick Nash has pointed out, if oil drilling rigs are thought to be offensive to the eye, then how can a much *greater* number of huge windmills be any better? It takes acres and acres

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of wind generators to produce as much energy as the oil or gas from one well. So why is the one form of energy extraction considered evil, while the other is a darling of eco-warriors?

Next, let's look at windpower using that other favorite criteria of Greens: How does it affect animals? I quote from a recent report by Steven Hayward and Julie Majeres of the Pacific Research Institute:

> Windpower is arguably the worst form of electricity generation from the standpoint of harm to wildlife. The world's largest windpower facility, located east of San Francisco, is estimated to kill 39 Golden Eagles every year—eight times more than Exxon Valdez oil spill (which was a one-time, instead of annual, occurrence). Nationwide, windpower is estimated to kill 10,000 birds a year. If windpower were expanded to supply 20 percent of the nation's electricity, the annual bird mortality figure would be more than 4 million.

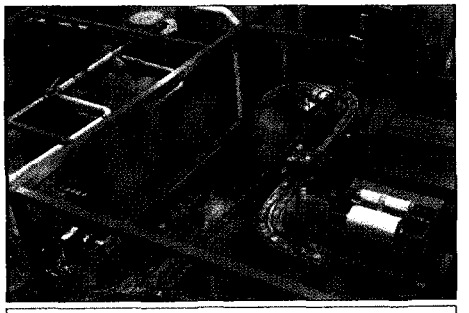
So there are costs that go with benefits. No free lunch, even from these Cuisinarts of the air.

Windmill hype is just one example of Green irrationality—and hypocrisy—from among scores we could cite. (Other stark examples can be found in the feature article on pages 20-27.) Let us remember that almost all aspects of modern life "pollute." Every hospital, every bakery, every mass transit network has side effects that could panic us into paralysis if we foolishly obsessed over them instead of calmly minimizing them through intelligent engineering and management. Let us also remember that industrial life is a blessing, and that a high-energy-consumption society is the very best kind in which to live. Visit a low-energy-use (Third World) culture, and you will find that they are enormously less humane, not to mention environmentally dirtier.

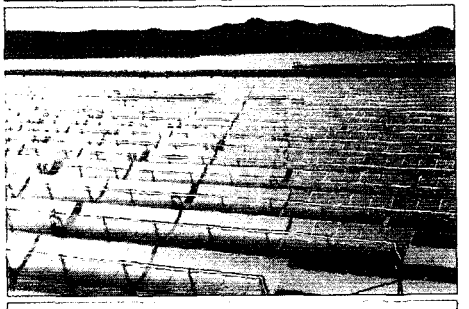
If we are to make sensible decisions about our energy supplies—which are the lifeblood of our civilization—we will need to be very cool and hard-headed in coming years. On all sides activists are encouraging us to panic, to feel guilty about our present energy usage, and to believe unrealistic claims about utopian alternatives. (In light of today's electricity-drought in California, it's almost surreal to recall that just a couple years ago the Clintonites, acting under environmentalists pressue, were making plans to rip out large hydropower dams in several western states.)

The costs of wrong turns in this area can be severe. Responding with a childishly insistent "no" to all proposals for new energy development will eventually lead to blackouts, rocketing prices, shortages, and job layoffs at damaged companies. I've seen estimates that this year's mini-spike in energy prices (which stems from the last decade's inattention to opening new supplies) may have knocked a full point off our economic growth. Over time, those sorts of penalties accumulate. And then, instead of living in a society that has banished Alzheimer's Disease, solved education and poverty tragedies, and created beauty, we wake up in a world that's grayer and flatter than we'd hoped.

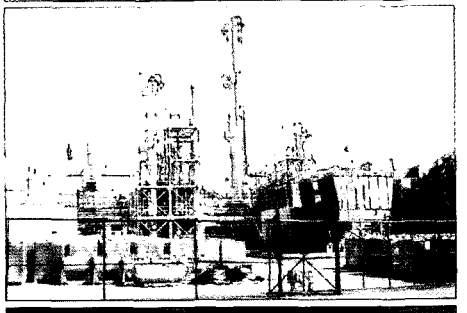
Not to mention cruelly cold come winter.



The Ben & Jerry's Factory Think "oil refinery." If you imagine ice cream gets made without freezer chemicals, lots of electricity, and tons of manure and other waste products, you better imagine again.

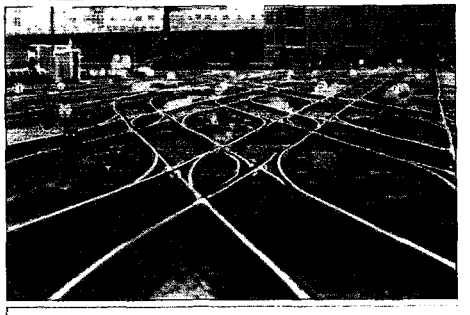


Solar Panels are extremely bulky—you'd have to carpet a valley with them to power even a small town. And where does the steel, glass, copper, concrete, etc. to make them come from?



Cancer Cures Don't Grow Under Cabbage Leaves This is a pharmaceutical factory. Not especially pretty. And, yes, it emits some pollution. But it manufactures penicillin and a life-saving anti-breast cancer drug. Should we do without it?

Recycling plastic and cardboard—what could be more eco-O.K.? Don't forget, though, that it takes lots of hauling trucks, heavy machinery, and *energy*. And did you ever see a paper recycling facility up close?



Mass Transit is a darling of environmentalists. But it too consumes land and resources, and produces eyesores.

Not Exactly a "Natural" Environment They work. But they have their down sides too, and high cost isn't the only one.

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Sidelights

A Minneapolis library has banned chess playing due to the rowdy behavior of those who come to watch the games. ❦ A Pennsylvania high-schooler was disqualified from running for junior class president after joking during a speech that he would give everyone in his grade a cookie were he elected. School officials said the cookie pledge was a form of bribery. ❦ Doctors in many Melbourne, Australia hospitals now refuse to perform potentially life-saving procedures such as lung and heart transplants, artery bypasses, and coronary artery grafts on smokers. ❦ The Virginia House of Delegates declined to apologize for the state's former policy of forced sterilization. As part of Virginia's eugenics program, thousands were sterilized between 1924 and 1979. Victims have been unable to sue the state for damages because the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Virginia's eugenics law in 1927. ❦ Only 21 percent of workers believe a business-lunch cocktail is acceptable, according to a recent survey. Dinner cocktails are acceptable 68 percent of the time. ❦ Women now account for 46 percent of the U.S. workforce, according to the Employment Policy Foundation, and may outnumber men by 2025. ❦ One out of every seven California voters declines to name a party preference when registering to vote, an increase of 50 percent over the last decade. · · · 95 percent of Californians vote for either a Democrat or Republican in gubernatorial or Presidential races. ❦ Vandals in San Gabriel Valley, California used BB and pellet guns to shoot out the windows of over 300 vehicles, mostly SUVs. ❦ Students at Ferndale High, Washington elected a lesbian student as prom king. · · · A memorial to gay veterans is planned for Desert Memorial Park in Palm Springs, California. ❦ **John H. Rogers**, a Massachusetts politician, proposed a bill that would count jails and prisons as low-income housing. ❦ The Information Office of China's State Council issued a report entitled "U.S. Human Rights Record 2000" condemning America, "the only country where carrying a private weapon is a constitutional right," as a "society ridden with violence."

Taxpayers may be overpaying as much as $311 million to the IRS due to their own errors, according to the General Accounting Office. · · · Over half of all Americans now pay to have their tax returns professionally prepared. · · · H&R Block's revenue for tax preparation services totals $1.3 billion · · · IRS chief **Charles Rossotti** predicts an increase in tax audits. ❦ 85 percent of Americans think at least one quarter of the federal budget surplus should be used for tax relief. ❦ A retired trucker won a baseball bat signed by **Babe Ruth**, but had to sell it because of the $35,000 in taxes he'd have to pay to keep it. ❦ Nicaragua has banned afternoon siestas for federal employees. It is estimated the measure will save the government $40 million. ❦ A financial officer of the U.S. Postal Service was given a relocation package of $142,000 to move a distance of 15 miles. · · · A federal audit shows that the Postal Service wasted over $1 billion over the last four years. · · · During the last three years of **Bill Clinton**'s administration, the Department of Education lost track of $450 million. The department's chief inspector attributes the losses to waste, fraud, and errors. ❦ Over 40 percent of Americans surveyed believe the FBI "knowingly withheld" evidence in the **Timothy McVeigh** case. ❦ While appearing together on "Politically Incorrect," talk-show host **Dennis Prager** asked **Whoopi Goldberg** why fighting communism is morally different from fighting Nazism. She responded, "I'm not sure that communism is necessarily a bad thing." · · · The Socialist Party plans to create a non-profit think tank called the American Socialist Foundation. "We like to think of this as our Cato Institute," said **Greg Pason**, the party's national secretary. ❦ According to former Democratic senator and Presidential candidate **Eugene McCarthy**, the three greatest outrages of his political life were **Joe McCarthy**'s Communist witch hunt, the Vietnam War, and the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill. ❦ 79 percent of Americans would be interested in attending a speech by **Colin Powell** according to a recent Gallup poll. He topped a list which included **George W. Bush** and **Oprah Winfrey**. · · · The poll showed that more Americans would be interested in hearing a speech by **Jimmy Carter** (66 percent) than one by Bill Clinton (51 percent). ❦ A Thai farmer has invented a mini-treadmill to aid in the training of roosters for cock fighting. —*BB*

Let's take each other's pills tonight and see what happens.

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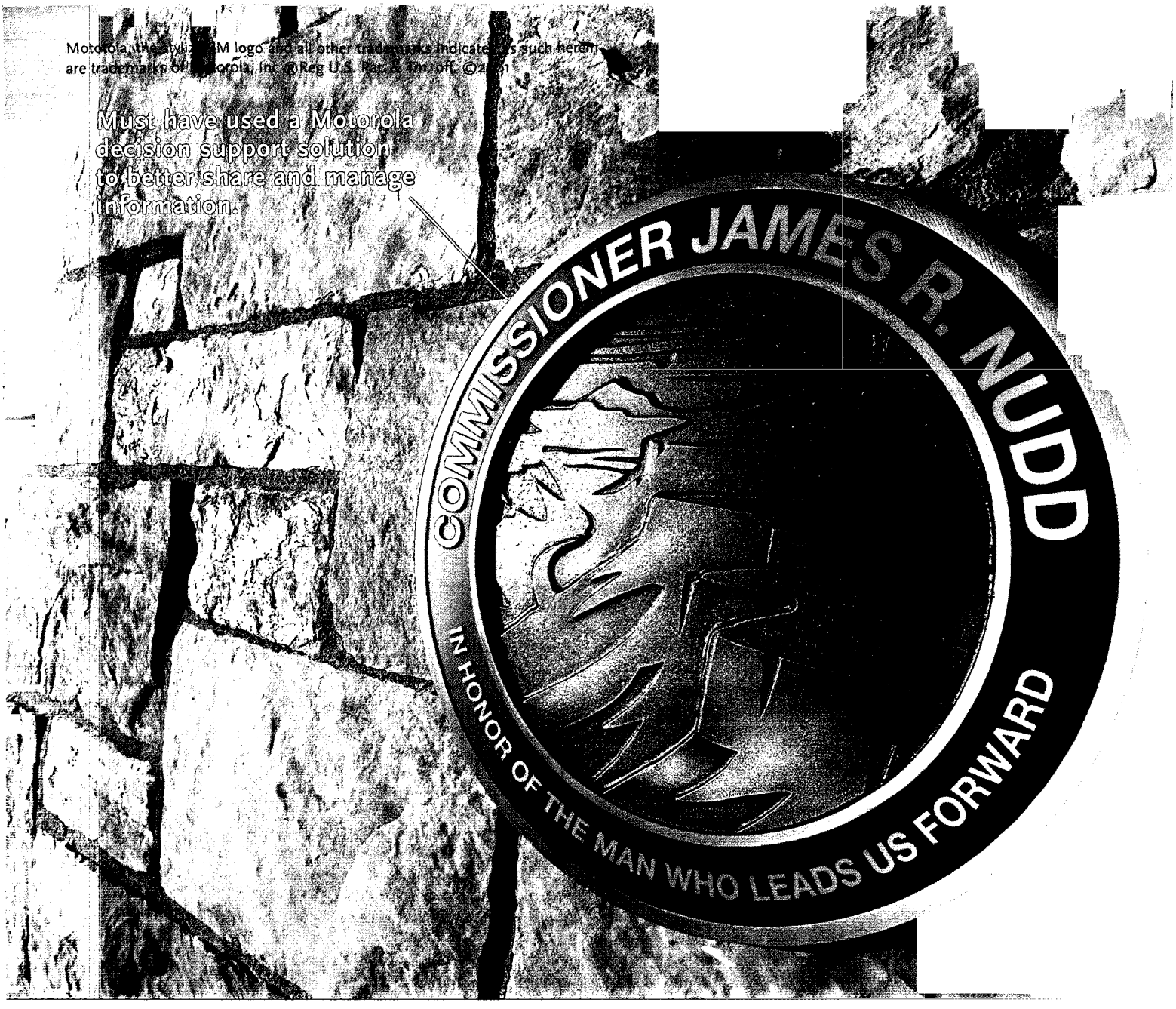

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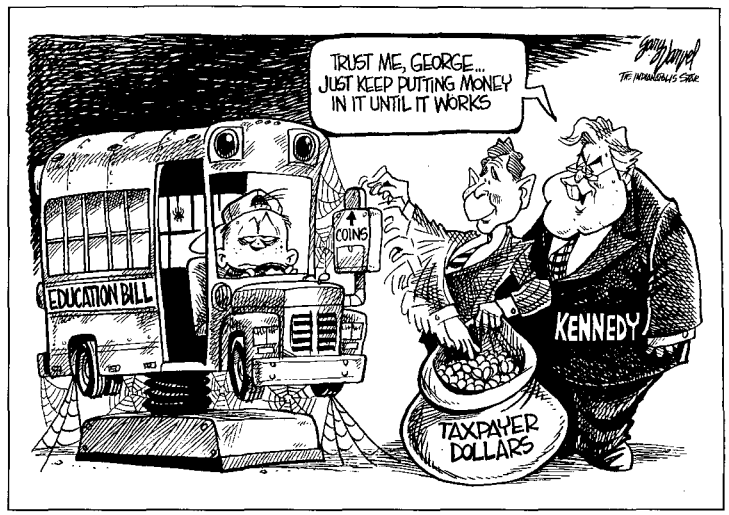

UNLIKELY PRO-FAMILY THEMES FROM L.A.

Usually outsiders have to plead with Hollywood to honor family values. This summer, however, two movies appeared that, in their own way, resonated with surprising pro-family themes.

Steven Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, about a robot boy in the future who yearns to feel real love, is one of the most debated movies of the year. One of its central themes is the value of familial love. David, the robot played by Haley Joel Osment, is adopted by Monica and Henry Swinton because their biological son has been cryogenically frozen while they wait for a cure for his disease to be found. At first a fixture in their loving home, David is cast aside when the Swintons' son miraculously recovers. David's ensuing journey—a fascinating adventure through a futuristic world, part dreamy fairy tale, part harrowing science fiction—is driven by his desire to become a "real live boy" so he'll be accepted by his parents. The film is partly a warning about the dangers of evolving reproductive technology, but under Steven Spielberg's direction it's also a testament to the idea that family love is a defining element of what it means to be human.

Baby Boy is a very different movie, set in the strife-ridden streets of contemporary South Central Los Angeles, which is also where writer-director John Singleton's first film, *Boyz N the Hood*, took place. On the surface just another "gangsta" flick touting misogyny and mayhem, *Baby Boy* eventually suggests that a responsible family life is the way to escape those very things.

Twenty-year-old ne'er-do-well and unmarried father Jody (Tyrese Gibson) is still living with his mother, has no job, and no plans to find one. His future looks as dim as that of thousands of other young black men in America's low-income neighborhoods. Yet rather than blame society and give Jody further reasons to sulk in his room, Singleton issues his character a challenge. Eventually worn down by the infantilism of his carousing lifestyle (there's a great shot of this man-child riding a bike next to a passel of kids because he doesn't have his own car), Jody decides to embrace his responsibilities by finding work and devoting himself to Yvette (Taraji Henson), the mother of one of his sons. To his surprise, contentment and love are his rewards.

That all of this comes from a director actually raised amidst the decay of ghetto L.A. makes its message all the more meaningful. Like *A.I.*, *Baby Boy* ends with a portrait of familial love, as Jody, Yvette, and their son bundle together on a couch, content just to be in each other's arms. That's a comfort not enough American families experience—and one Hollywood rarely embraces.

—**Josh Larsen** *is a* TAE *contributing writer.*

GRAY DAVIS GENERATES HEAT, NOT LIGHT

California Governor Gray Davis is not one to let a little energy crisis get in the way of his political ambition. He's learned from the woes of fellow New Democrat Bill Clinton, who proved that any situation—no matter how damaging it may at first seem—can ultimately be turned into a partisan advantage. Give Davis a blackout, he'll start selling flashlights.

He managed for a while to deflect his misfortunes at the man he hopes to defeat in 2004, President George W. Bush, by casting the blame for California's predicament on a vast lone-star conspiracy. "What's going on here, pure and simple," he complained in May, "is unconscionable price-gouging by the big energy producers—most of them, incidentally, located in Texas."

Pity Davis spokesman Steve Maglivio, who, in July, had to explain that comment to reporters who had just gone over the state's energy contracts—and found that Texas companies accounted for less than 10 percent of them. Left with little other recourse, Maglivio simply extended the attack to the other red states that backed Bush on the notorious 2000 electoral map. "Anywhere they wear cowboy hats," the flak blustered, "they probably have handkerchiefs across their face because they are robbing us blind."

Actually, the suppliers that have helped the Golden State keep its lights on (albeit intermittently) are based all over North America, including Vancouver and Seattle. But there are no political points to be scored by blasting snowshoe-wearing Canadians or slicker-clad, Starbucks-slurping Pacific Northwesterners.

And for Davis, it's all about scoring political points.

To aid him through the tough times, the governor briefly added political con-

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sultants Chris Lehane and Mark Fabiani, both spin doctors from the Clinton–Gore war rooms, to the state payroll—at the price of $30,000 a month. These high-priced advisers, nicknamed "the masters of disaster," crafted a strategy worthy of their former employers. In addition to attacking energy producers, Bush, Texas, and anyone wearing a Stetson, Davis has singled out an unlikely target—Los Angeles. He's even threatened to seize the city's municipally owned power generators.

It's a strange bit of demagoguery. The L.A. Department of Water and Power has consistently provided the state with energy (usually sold at cost plus 15 percent), often on credit, throughout the year. The DWP has been a good neighbor to its own detriment—it could have made more money selling its surplus energy on the open market.

So what's earned the City of Angels Davis' diabolic ire? What else—political calculation.

Republican Richard Riordan, who recently completed his second and final term as the city's mayor, is widely expected to challenge Davis' re-election effort in 2002. Accusing L.A. of price-gouging is an easy way for the governor to preemptively discredit his potential opponent. In June, when Riordan lent his support to a long-term contract to sell DWP electricity to the state *at cost*, Davis balked. According to some reports, he wanted to wait for Riordan's Democratic successor to take office on July 1 before inking the deal. That way, Riordan couldn't take any of the credit.

For Davis, politics fuels policy. Too bad it can't fuel the state power grid, too.

—**Chris Weinkopf** *is an editorial writer for the* Los Angeles Daily News.

GLOBAL WARMING AND HOT HOUSE POLITICS

In the July 23 issue of The New Republic, *Gregg Easterbrook notes that many global warming alarmists are motivated by something other than an interest in saving the planet. An excerpt:*

As concerns about global warming have mounted, nearly all the attention has centered on carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas produced by the burning of fossil fuels. The Kyoto plan was drafted mainly as an anti-carbon-dioxide agreement. Environmentalists, especially, preach against carbon dioxide because they regard it as the monstrous consequence of human hubris in burning fossil fuels. But focusing on carbon dioxide makes anti-greenhouse plans costly and impractical—that's why no developed nation, including no member of the greener-than-thou European Union, has ratified Kyoto. Meanwhile, under our noses is an anti-greenhouse strategy that could be practical and affordable: one based on dealing first with methane.

As warming agents, methane molecules are about 30 times stronger than carbon dioxide. More importantly, methane emissions are not economically necessary. For the next few decades, it is impossible to imagine running the world without fossil fuels: Until clean energy forms become practical, any harsh program of carbon reduction would cause recession in the West and suffering in developing nations. Methane, on the other hand, could be strictly regulated without any detriment to the global economy. Artificial methane emissions arise from natural-gas pipeline leaks and errors during gas and petroleum drilling; from rice cultivation; from decomposing landfills; and, yes, from cattle. Pipeline leaks can be plugged, and drilling leaks can be stopped via improved techniques; simple changes in rice cultivation can lessen methane; technology already exists to prevent methane leaks from landfills; and genetic engineering has the potential to contract dairy and beef herds by making individual animals more productive.

Since methane reforms would mainly tighten leaks and change cultivation techniques, there would be no underlying damage to prosperity or to growth, as there surely would be if policymakers restricted fossil fuels. What's more, because methane naturally washes out of the atmosphere in eight to ten years, while carbon dioxide has a century-long "residence" time, reduced methane would provide a faster payoff than reduced carbon dioxide. Another bonus: Because methane is a factor in smog, cutting methane would be good for human health. By contrast, carbon dioxide has no direct impact on human health, so restricting it might help the environment but not people.

But what the hard-core enviros want is punitive fossil-fuel restrictions that screw big oil and big coal; a relatively painless global-warming fix that lets fossil fuel off the hook would leave the movement's Left heartbroken. For its part, the European Union doesn't like the methane-first strategy because it would shift condemnation away from the United States. America's coal-dependent energy economy pumps 83 percent of its greenhouse gases as carbon dioxide, while Europe's natural-gas-dependent energy economy releases, proportionally, much more methane. The Kyoto Protocol was written with a carbon dioxide emphasis principally to please enviros and Euros. A methane-first strategy might do the most, fastest for the planet; but doing the most, fastest for the planet is not necessarily what global-warming politics is about.

THE POWER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING

According to a new nationwide survey by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, one out of five American teenagers doesn't know which country the colonies declared independence from on July 4, 1776.

Presumably teachers had more important topics to talk about—like the glories of Iroquois matriarchy, and whether it was depression that drove Benedict Arnold to sell out.

THEY DON'T KNOW JACK

Another dead white male has apparently been ruled politically incorrect.

The Chronicles of Narnia, an enchanting series of seven short novels for children, were written by C.S. Lewis (known as "Jack" to his friends) over 50 years ago.

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The first and best-known volume is *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, in which four children find that an old wardrobe leads them to another world (Narnia), where the evil White Witch has locked the land in permanent winter and transforms all creatures who irk her into stone. The children soon hear of a savior who will set all things right in the kingdom: a lion named Aslan. Before the tale is over, Aslan submits to death at the hand of the White Witch in order to atone for another's sins; undergoes a bodily resurrection; and participates in the grand battle in which the witch is defeated.

Taking cues from the success of Harry Potter, HarperCollins is apparently ready to cash in on the popularity of Lewis's fantasies. The *New York Times* recently reported that the company had "struck deals" for production of plush Narnia dolls and, most critically, new Narnia volumes written by modern authors. The marketing execs determined that Lewis's story concept needs a little tweaking to make it palatable to modern audiences.

"We'll need to be able to give emphatic assurances that no attempt will be made to correlate the stories to Christian imagery/ theology," wrote a company executive in a leaked internal HarperCollins memo.

Lewis's stepson, who inherited the Narnia copyrights, says he hopes the new marketing tactics will expose secular readers to Christian principles. Some fans of Lewis, however, have expressed alarm at the thought that the classic books could be tampered with, added to, or taken away from. HarperCollins history indicates a precedent: Since 1994 the company has published sequels and prequels to Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* series—with few of them expressing the same virtues that make the originals so memorable.

Meanwhile, Narnia.com, a Web site operated by HarperCollins, currently describes Narnia as a "world...where a witch decrees eternal winter; where there are more talking animals than people; and where battles are fought by Centaurs, Giants, and Fauns." There is no mention of battle lines drawn between good and evil. Aslan is identified merely as "the founder of Narnia."

Is this what Jack intended? In a 1954 letter to a class of fifth grade students, Lewis explained his premise in writing the *Chronicles:* "Let us suppose that there were a land like Narnia and that the Son of God, as He became a Man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen."

One is tempted to say that the people at HarperCollins simply don't know Jack.

—**Laurel L. Cornell** *is a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute.*

CREATIVE HISTORY

For years, Mount Holyoke professor Joseph "Full Metal Jacket" Ellis had been regaling students, interviewers, and friends with gripping stories of his service in Vietnam. The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian claimed to have been a platoon leader and paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division. After the *Boston Globe* recently exposed these claims as lies, Mr. Ellis was forced to apologize for "having let stand" the "assumption" that he served in Vietnam. Mr. Ellis actually whiled away the Vietnam War in his college dorm room, presumably, like most academics, smoking pot and listening to the Beatles' "White Album."

Among the assumptions Mr. Ellis had let stand was his claim that after witnessing the horror of Vietnam first-hand, he came home and enlisted in the anti-war movement. He also boasted of helping David Halberstam with his 1972 best seller, *The Best and the Brightest*, by sharing his vivid recollections of Vietnam. In truth, he had no involvement in the anti-war movement, and Mr. Halberstam says he's never talked to Mr. Ellis.

Ellis also bragged about his work in the civil-rights movement, claiming that while on the Freedom Trail in Mississippi he was the victim of racist Southern cops banging on his door late at night and following his car. He wistfully recalled his years as a high school football star, describing to a reporter last year how he once scored a winning touchdown. Turns out he wasn't in Mississippi, and his greatest moment on the football field involved a clarinet.

Between 'Nam flashbacks and Freedom Rider reunions, Mr. Ellis co-authored the groundbreaking 1998 report that served as the Clinton flacks' giddiest "Gotcha" moment. Right at the climax of the impeachment drama, Ellis asserted "beyond any reasonable doubt that Jefferson had a long-term sexual relationship with his mulatto slave" Sally Hemings. Thus Bill Clinton wasn't a pervert, liar, and felon after all; he was part of a long history of venerable men molesting the help. As Ellis put it: "It is as if Clinton had called one of the most respected character witnesses in all of U.S. history to testify that the primal urge has a most distinguished presidential pedigree."

As author of the award-winning book *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, Mr. Ellis spoke with some authority on the matter. He dismissed protests from "die-hard Jefferson worshippers," and proclaimed the debate over. But proof of a Jefferson-Hemings liaison was as fanciful as Professor Ellis' résumé padding. Two months after the report's "findings" had been publicized in

PREENING ON CAMPUS

Among the courses opening this September at the University of Michigan is "How to be Gay: Male Homosexuality and Initiation." Professor David Halperin—recently hired as a Distinguished Professor—promises the class will cover "diva-worship, drag, muscle culture, taste, style, political activism" among other topics. "Just because you happen to be a gay man doesn't mean that you don't have to learn how to become one. Gay men do some of that learning on their own, but often we learn how to be gay from others." English 317 will apparently be a hands-on class: The catalog description states that "the course itself will constitute an experiment in the very process of initiation that it hopes to understand." Wonder what'll be on the final exam.

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BEYOND THE PALE

As the House of Representatives considers measures that would ban human cloning, it's worth noting that a global tide of opinion against the practice has recently developed. According to *Citizen Issues Alert*:

- Australia just passed a law banning human cloning.
- France has banned cloning.
- The European Union condemns the idea.
- The German parliament banned cloning in 1997, with Christian Democrats joining with Green party members in comparing cloning to Nazi eugenics.
- A Japanese anti-cloning law stipulates heavy fines and prison terms for those who attempt to clone a human.
- Canadian Science Minister Gilbert Normand says Canada is seeking a worldwide ban on the practice.

every news outlet where English is spoken, there was a slight correction. One of Mr. Ellis' co-authors, pathologist Eugene Foster, admitted to the British science journal *Nature* that they had not proved Thomas Jefferson fathered any children by Sally Hemings. What they meant to say was "Jefferson could have fathered the slave's last child." Just like Mr. Ellis could have served in Vietnam.

The scientists had compared the DNA from descendants of Sally Hemings' last son to the DNA of descendants of one of Jefferson's paternal uncles. The report established only that *some* Jefferson male had fathered a child with Hemings. There were 25 Jefferson males with the same DNA alive when Hemings conceived her last son, and seven of them were at Monticello during the relevant time period. Only eight newspapers even mentioned the correction.

Around the time Mr. Ellis was promoting his phony line on Jefferson, he declared in the *New York Times* with pompous authority that "a poll of the Founders would produce a clear majority" opposing Mr. Clinton's impeachment. Maybe he talked with those Founders in 'Nam?

—**Ann Coulter** *is a syndicated columnist.*

OLD SCHOOL IN CYBERWORLD

"So far, there is no good evidence that most uses of computers significantly improve learning." So said William Bennett, secretary of education under Ronald Reagan, and traditional-values guru, last year. So why has Mr. Bennett, of all people, launched "K12"—an Internet-based school for kindergarten to twelfth grade? Because Mr. Bennett sees computers as a means to an end, not as an educational centerpiece in themselves.

Rather than turning kids into expert Web surfers—which, no surprise, results mainly in efforts to download pre-written term papers and search for porn sites—Bennett sees computers as delivery mechanisms for precisely the old-school learning he has always espoused. "Technology is here. The question is not whether it will be used in education," Bennett acknowledges, "the question is whether we will use it right. Mostly, we have not. It has been used as a substitute for teaching, and the kids end up playing games."

K12, of which Bennett is chairman, is producing curricula which emphasize language arts, phonics, math, science, history, music, and art. In the early grades, only about 25 percent of the class work will actually be done on the computer. The rest of the schooling time is to be spent on old-fashioned learning like reading books and solving math problems by hand. Also planned are health and phys-ed classes, and, yes, a virtues curriculum.

Based in McLean, Virginia, K12 can boast other big-name proponents of traditional education, including Fordham Foundation president Chester Finn and author George Gilder. Yale computer skeptic/computer master David Gelernter is the venture's chief technology adviser.

While the main target audience is parents of the country's nearly 2 million homeschoolers (Bennett hopes to enroll at least 100,000 homeschool families by 2005) the company also aims to sell its on-line curricula to public and private schools, summer schools, before- and after-school programs, charter schools, and virtual schools.

Courses are scheduled to start this fall, and K12's snazzy Web site is up and running at www.k12.com, where lesson plans can be previewed, children can be pre-enrolled, and people can subscribe to the K12 newsletter—delivered via e-mail, of course.

DEPENDS ON WHAT THE MEANING OF "FIRST" IS

Aaron Sorkin, producer of the NBC drama "The West Wing," recently pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor and two felony charges for possession of marijuana, cocaine, and hallucinogenic mushrooms. In exchange for his guilty plea, district attorneys placed Sorkin in a "deferred entry of judgment" program. For 24 months Sorkin will attend treatment classes while remaining in his Studio City home and continuing work on his hit show. If Sorkin completes the program successfully, the entire case will be

You're being unhired.

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SO THAT'S WHY ENERGY CRUNCHES DON'T WORRY THEM

Our last issue included a SCAN item about a recent string of articles in the *New York Times Magazine* glorifying amoral or immoral behavior like stealing. Right after that, the column in question (which is now a regular feature) ran an essay on "How to Steal Electrical Power." It is "illegal," the piece acknowledges, but "is not difficult." "For blackout evasion you can surreptitiously hook up to an energy line that's supplying an essential-service facility"—in other words, divert it from a hospital or firehouse. The story even describes how, to save money, you can, "using about $10 worth of Radio Shack parts...get your electric meter...to go backward."

expunged from his record.

To qualify for this gentle treatment in California, one must be a first-time drug offender. Yet in 1999, Sorkin admitted in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* to an addiction to freebase cocaine. About two months before his arrest in April, Sorkin was honored by the substance abuse center Phoenix House for his "personal victory" over drug use. If Sorkin has no prior record it's not because he's a first-time offender, but because this is the first time he's been caught.

The producer's celebrity status unquestionably helped him receive such light "punishment." This type of solution is generally not an option for drug offenders who haven't won an Emmy. So Aaron Sorkin will continue his glitzy life with scant inconvenience if he can stay off drugs for two years. Or at least not get caught.

—**Marilyn Perry** *is a journalism major at Oklahoma State University.*

WHEN POLITICS BECOMES A JOKE

One of the chief objections to legal restrictions on campaign finance expenditures of the sort advocated by John McCain is that by restricting the capacity of office-seekers and their backers to circulate their views, they will increase voters' dependence on the media for political information. Given the leftward bias of most journalists, such restrictions will inevitably weaken the capacity of more conservative candidates to get their message across, and to respond to attacks.

One aspect of this media bias which has received little comment is found in the comics. For several decades, one of the most widely circulated comic strips, Garry Trudeau's "Doonesbury," has devoted nearly half its time to sustained presentations of often scurrilous charges against Republican candidates and office holders. During the 1992 Presidential campaign, for instance, Trudeau produced numerous strips publicizing the testimony of a convicted felon that he had sold marijuana to Vice Presidential candidate Dan Quayle during the 1970s. The charges were generally recognized to be doubtful at the time, since the prisoner making them was serving a 50-year sentence for drug smuggling, perjury, and setting off bombs in an Indianapolis suburb, and no corroborating evidence for his claim had been discovered. But whereas any responsible news story would have had to acknowledge this doubtfulness, Trudeau was under no such constraint. Needless to say, although the charges were later demonstrated to have been a complete fabrication, the cartoonist never published an apology. (Even had he done so, the Presidential campaign was long over, the victor being a professed "non-inhaler.")

Just this past May, Trudeau ran six strips charging that the Bush administration had fired a government mapmaker for producing a map of the Alaskan tundra that located a caribou mating site at the exact point where the administration favors drilling for oil. The story was another of Trudeau's gross distortions: The offending mapmaker worked at a birdwatching center, knew nothing about caribou, and had produced a map so inaccurate that his supervisors agreed he should be dismissed (see page 51). Alas, relatively few "Doonesbury" readers will ever learn of these factual corrections.

The problem of political bias in the comics isn't limited to "Doonesbury." Other strips like "Wiley's Non Sequitur" and "The Boondocks" have devoted recent installments to strong partisan criticism of conservatives ranging from George W. Bush to Ward Connerly.

Conservatives have little means of combating the political bias of the comics, any more than they do the liberal bias of Hollywood, or the leftward tilt of TV news and major urban newspapers. (The one nationally circulated conservative strip, "Mallard Fillmore," has a far smaller readership than "Doonesbury.") This is one more demonstration of why the American public, if it is to be properly informed, desperately needs a political system where candidates are free to raise and spend money disseminating their messages directly to voters—without going through the one-sided filters of the big media.

Otherwise our politics really will become a joke.

—**David Schaefer** *is a professor of political science at Holy Cross College.*

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Forward Observer

James Glassman

Bulls, Bears, and Scapegoats on Wall Street

Every bear market needs a scapegoat, and congressional fingers are currently pointing at stock analysts. These are the professionals at investment firms who scrutinize financial statements, make on-site visits to companies, interview managers, query competitors, and then publicly render their opinions (buy, sell, or hold) on individual stocks. Most analysts have a specialty: utilities, semiconductors, airlines. As a financial columnist, I have had hundreds of discussions with analysts, and, in general, have found them quite knowledgeable.

But don't take my word for it. In April, an extensive study of the performance of analysts was published in *The Journal of Finance*, a highly regarded publication for scholars. The authors—Brad Barber of the University of California at Davis, Reuven Lehavy and Brett Trueman of Berkeley, and Maureen McNichols of Stanford—looked at a database of 360,000 pieces of advice from 269 brokerage houses and 4,340 analysts, released between 1986 and 1996. They found that the analysts' favorite stocks returned an annual average of 18.8 percent, while those that the analysts denigrated returned an annual average of just 5.8 percent. The Standard & Poor's 500 stock-market benchmark over this period returned an average of 14.5 percent.

These results are exceptional. Rare is the mutual fund that can beat the S&P 500 by four points over ten years. In fact, the benchmark has beaten a majority of funds over the past two decades.

In an unpublished follow-up a month later, the authors found, again, that analysts produced spectacular results between 1997 and 1999. But the year 2000 was a debacle. The highly recommended stocks did poorly and the least-favored stocks did well. What happened? Dr. Barber calls the year "a mystery," with a performance completely at odds with that of the previous 13 years.

Rep. Richard Baker (R-LA), chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over the regulation of investment firms, seized on the 2000 results as the basis for a June 14 hearing on "whether securities analysts are providing unbiased research to investors." The unstated premise was that analysts were not objective—because they are torn by allegiances to the investment banking side of their firms (which earn big bucks by helping companies raise investment money), and by their own financial holdings.

During the bull market in tech stocks, many well-known Wall Street analysts, including Mary Meeker of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and Henry Blodgett of Merrill Lynch, helped attract new business for their firms' investment bankers. No doubt about it. And Meeker, Blodgett and others were slow to change their optimistic recommendations for e-commerce companies like Priceline.com, so some observers wonder if their views were biased.

Peter Elkin of *Fortune* wrote that Ms. Meeker was "the single most powerful symbol of how Wall Street can lead investors astray," and that she "came to see herself not merely as an analyst but as a player—a power broker, a dealmaker, a force to be reckoned with." It is just this conflict—an erosion of the famous "Chinese Wall" separating the investment-banking side of a large Wall Street firm from the research side—which, in the eyes of critics, threatens the objectivity of analysts and the wealth of investors.

The truth is, conflicts of interest pervade the securities industry, because they pervade life. But the public can easily judge whether the professionalism of analysts overcomes their interest conflicts: If an analyst is biased, his recommendations are unlikely to beat the benchmarks. Investing is a tough racket, and anyone who judges stocks on criteria other than fundamentals and technical indicators will ultimately fail, and his track record—closely watched by journalists and professional tracking services—will soon cost him his job.

The real question is not whether analysts are torn by conflicts but whether government should enact regulations to try to remedy the situation. Government rules would often be unenforceable. And, at worst, they could restrict the flow of information by raising compliance costs and driving good analysts out of the business. Instead of advising the public, the stars would simply run their own accounts.

Investment firms have gigantic incentives to make sure analysts give objective recommendations. Biased analysts will give their firms a reputation for inaccuracy and corruption, and will lose customers. Why, then, haven't more firms taken steps to enforce and publicize Chinese Wall rules? Probably because investors don't really care about possible bias. They care about good advice.

Still, in anticipation of the June 14 hearings, the Securities Industry Association issued new "best practices" rules for 14 major firms. A few days after the hearing, Merrill Lynch issued its own new set of rules, tougher than the SIA's. These were both admirable steps, and if investors truly care about the issue, we will see other firms competing with Merrill to issue more and more stringent rules to ensure objectivity.

What bothered me about the congres-

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AP/World Wide Photos

Energy Crunch Replay

What a difference a quarter century—and a President—makes

By Karina Rollins

"I want to have an unpleasant talk with you about a problem that is unprecedented in our history." Relax—that was Jimmy Carter, 24 years ago. The energy talk we're going to have today is far more pleasant and optimistic, about a problem that is no longer unprecedented.

In the early '70s, Americans lined up for gasoline the way Eastern Bloc citizens stood in line for toilet paper. OPEC imposed an oil embargo against the U.S. and Americans faced their first modern energy shortage. OPEC ended its embargo in 1974, but government controls on the production and pricing of oil and gas brought another painful squeeze in 1976-77. Ronald Reagan helped ease costs through deregulation of energy prices in 1981. New exploration plus efficient conservation—both kicked off by market pricing signals—restored the ample flow of moderately priced energy to America's active population.

Then, seemingly out of the blue: The price of natural gas more than doubled last year. Northerners saw their heating bills leap upward. Gasoline approached the $2 per gallon mark across the country. And people throughout California (and some other places) grew unsure whether their alarm clocks, stoves, and traffic lights would turn on in the morning. So bad has the situation in the Golden State been, with the constant threat of renewed blackouts and brownouts, that authorities have been worried about riots and serious damage to the state's business economy.

How did today's energy woes develop? As Charli Coon, an energy analyst at the Heritage Foundation explains, "Since 1973, U.S. energy consumption has increased by about 30 percent—roughly the same as our population growth. Simply put, there are more people using energy to power their homes, cars, air conditioners, televisions, and computers. But the number of

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power plants and lines hasn't increased in proportion to the population surge, so prices have risen." Supply and demand. Remember that quaint concept?

A steadily rising population, especially coupled with the fresh electricity demands of a new electronic economy, indicates an obvious need for additional power production. So who was asleep at the wheel? While Ronald Reagan staved off a full-fledged energy crisis in the early '80s through deregulation of energy prices, even the Gipper couldn't open the way for enough new power plants and energy exploration. President George Herbert Walker Bush made a stab at opening Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, but was rejected by a Democratic Congress. Clearly Bush Sr. recognized energy as a priority—he was willing to go to war for oil in 1991—but access to Persian Gulf petroleum, important as it is, doesn't address obstacles like the lack of an adequate power-distribution infrastructure.

"The previous administration simply drew up a list of fuels it *didn't* like—which together account for 73 percent of America's energy supply. Some policy."

Many conservatives like to point to Bill Clinton as the big snoozer. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, in a May 24 talk at the Competitive Enterprise Institute's annual dinner, lamented that "the previous administration…simply drew up a list of fuels it *didn't* like—nuclear energy, coal, hydropower, and oil—which together account for 73 percent of America's energy supply. Some policy." "So today," he continued, "after eight years of ignoring the problem, the nation confronts a serious national energy crisis."

Did Mr. Clinton really ignore energy issues? Perhaps not entirely, but when he did address energy his focus seemed to be on regulating it rather than on getting it into the homes of Americans. In 1993, Clinton's energy plan consisted largely of a proposal to raise taxes on most forms of fuel, including oil, coal, even clean-burning natural gas. Clinton also was enamored of a "national security premium," a separate levy on oil, which would have driven up the cost of home heating oil as well as gasoline.

Four years later, having failed at the tax on fossil fuels, Bill Clinton tried to prod the U.S. into energy asceticism in a different way. At the Kyoto global warming summit he committed the United States (pending Senate ratification which has never even come close to materializing) to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions (in effect, fossil fuel use) to *1990* levels by the year 2017. Given that the U.S. will have about 69 million more people in 2017 than it did in 1990 (all living in an evermore energy-intensive computerized world), meeting this requirement would have harshly pinched American economic output and prosperity—which is why Democrats as well as Republicans in the Congress united in repudiating the Clinton-Gore pledge. When the Clinton administration launched its next energy initiative in 1998, the push was again merely to trim energy use—not to avoid shortages, but as part of a strategy to reduce exhaust gases allegedly contributing to…what else…global warming.

But surely even the Clintonites can't be blamed for all of today's energy problems. A deeper obstruction has been America's increasingly powerful and unbending environmental movement. Trumpeting mankind's rape of air, water, trees, wetlands, tundra, mudflats, unusual weeds, fairy shrimp, moths, you name it, Green activists have over the last three decades erected high roadblocks that obstruct energy production and distribution at nearly every turn. "Radical resistance has clearly exacerbated the problem," says Charli Coon. For example, she points out, the Clean Air Act catapulted natural gas, which is especially clean-burning, into the fuel of choice for home heating and electrical generation. Yet after forcing this shift environmentalists continued to oppose the building of new power plants, even if they burned gas. They fought the laying of any new gas pipelines, and mobilized against proposals to drill for fresh gas supplies, especially offshore. As a result, most new natural gas had to be imported from Canada, and when those sources proved inadequate, Americans had very few alternatives on which to fall back. Shortage of natural gas is one important cause of the tremendous jump in electricity-generation costs just recently crippling California, as well as last winter's (and probably *next* winter's) explosion in home heating costs.

So, America is faced with a growing population, rising energy needs, an increasingly inadequate system of energy distribution, and environmentalist and NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard") forces powerful enough to stave off meaningful energy supply modernizations. All resulting in skyrocketing consumer and business costs, power trauma on the left coast, California-style shortages looming in New York, areas of the South, and other parts of the country, and seemingly no one willing to address the issue beyond yammering for price controls and other government-mandated Band-Aids.

Enter Dick Cheney. Put in charge of the new administration's task force on energy, the Veep serenely led the efforts that resulted in the much-anticipated Bush Energy Plan. Though accused of keeping secrets, Mr. Cheney had been open enough about the direction President Bush and he wanted to take on energy that when the proposal's calls for increased domestic energy exploration, construction of new power plants and pipelines, and breathing new life into nuclear energy were unveiled on May 17, they came as no surprise.

What *is* somewhat surprising about the report, given that it is, after all, a political document, is its almost exclusively long-range focus. The plan contains no proposal designed to lower your energy bill next week, next month, or even this year. What would earn Bush and Cheney love and adoration from many voters—and possibly a better shot at a second term—would be lower energy costs right away (preferably without any ugly new smokestacks or generators marring anyone's view). But the plan skips quick fixes and populist manna from heaven. Instead, the administration has proposed construction of up to 1,900 new power plants over 20 years, 3,800 miles of badly needed new pipelines, and other long-term supply-side solutions.

This has delighted economists and hard-headed energy experts, and will undoubtedly make America a much more reli-

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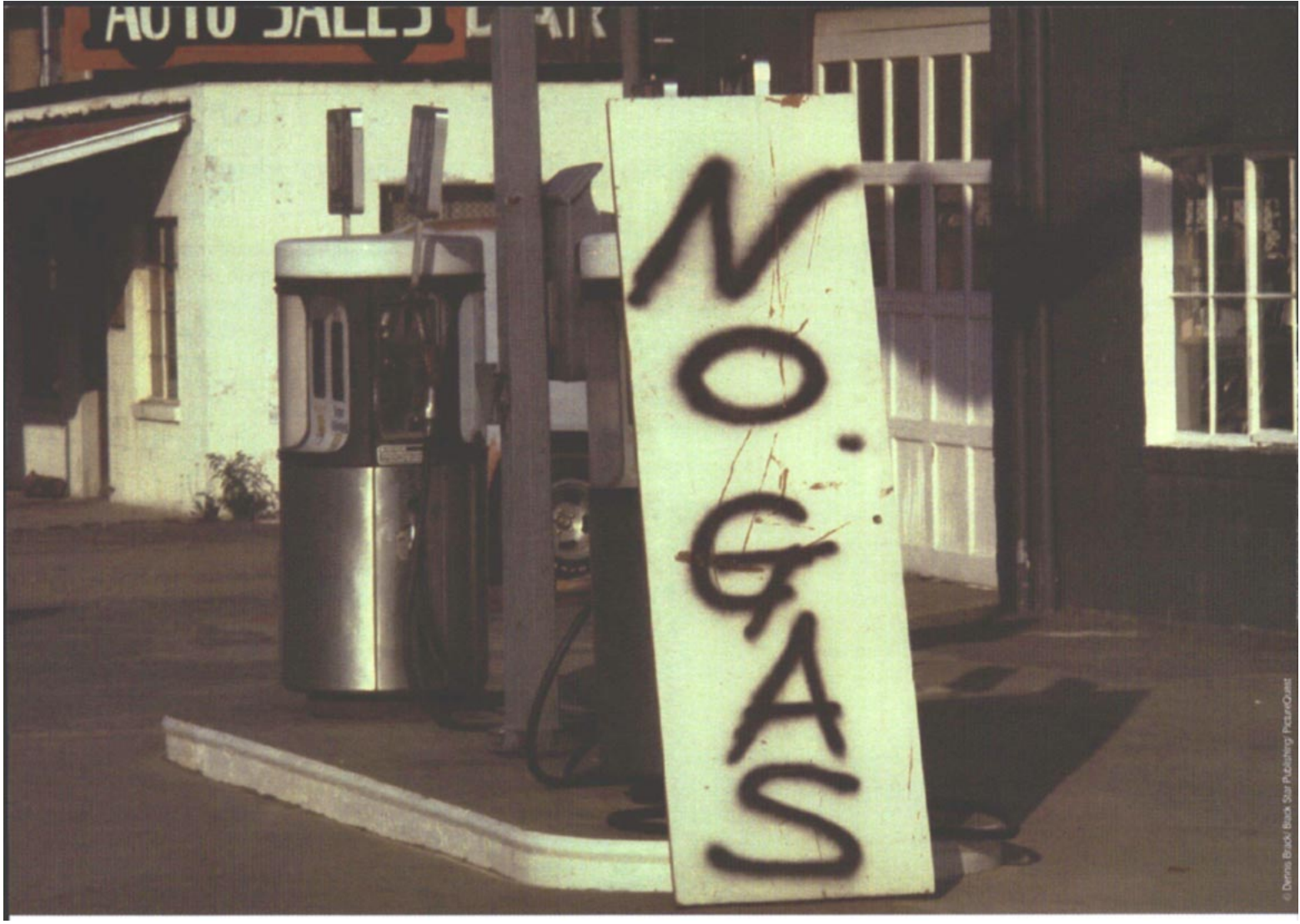

Sign of the times, 1979.

able place to run a computer or hospital incubator several years from now. But it does little, if anything, to curry favor with energy-afflicted voters today. Democrats leapt to exploit the Bush-Cheney refusal to wave the magic government wand. They demanded instant price controls, forced rebates from energy companies, and refund checks for California electricity users, drivers, and home heaters across the country.

Why this act of unpolitical, essentially selfless, ratiocination from the Bush camp? Perhaps it's not so much altruism as maturity. Mr. Cheney was famously the "grown-up" during last year's Presidential campaign. It makes sense that a real grown-up would surround himself with other adults. One of them is 41-year-old Andrew Lundquist, father of four, who joined Cheney on February 1 as the energy task force's staff director. Friendly, soft-spoken, and even more low-key than the Vice President, the Alaska native stresses one word: rationality. He says of the development of the plan: "George Bush and Dick Cheney were thinking about energy problems a year prior to the election. Energy issues were coming up, and many aspects of the energy shortages were turning out to be greater than expected." Once established, the task force "focused on what's the underlying problem," explains Lundquist, "and we came to the conclusion that there are three main concerns. One, an aging, antiquated energy-distribution infrastructure; two, artificial barriers to the market through regulations; and three, failure to use the best technologies and apply them to energy. Companies are simply not investing in energy."

Did the task force draw any comparisons to previous administrations on how *not* to approach an energy policy? "No, we didn't make comparisons; we looked to the future," maintains Lundquist without missing a beat. But while the mild-mannered Alaskan is too diplomatic to point them out, certain direct contrasts to a specific administration are impossible to ignore.

In the midst of the previous national energy crunch, Jimmy Carter didn't win any bonus points by showing up on national television in his cardigan looking like Mister Rogers and hectoring Americans over their way of life. "We must not be selfish or timid," he said to his fellow citizens, implying that they are just that. Mr. Carter called for "sacrifices"—"from every region, every class of people, and every interest group." Perhaps most infamously, he declared that his drive to reduce energy use was "the moral equivalent of war."

The late '70s Carter-era energy crisis could have been interpreted as an economic blockage, a supply glitch, an engineering problem. After all, no one attacks consumers for avarice when stores run out of laptops or PT Cruisers or drywall sheets. The response is to search for new ways of balancing supply and demand. Reagan *did* treat oil and gas shortages as economic breakdowns—which he promptly ended through relatively straightforward deregulatory reforms and removal of price controls. But Jimmy Carter, and many liberal politicians and environmentalists since, insisted that energy usage indicates some moral failing on the part of the American people.

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The Bush administration has taken a sharply different tack. Vice President Cheney has specifically decried "the impulse to begin telling Americans that we live too well." Who says extra street lighting, scores of new Internet hook-ups, and automatic dishwashers in nearly every home are licentious? Sacrifice? Not on the Bush-Cheney watch. "The aim here is efficiency," declared Cheney, "not austerity." Conservation? Well and good as a "personal virtue," says the Veep, but NIMFR ("Not In My Federal Rulebook"), if you please.

"Conservation," adds President Bush, "does not mean doing without." Instead, the White House's conservation efforts have focused on greater energy efficiency in specific appliances and processes, rather than banning whole categories of activity. "Twenty-first century conservation," as the President called it in one of his weekly radio addresses. Mr. Bush has defined conservation as "the result of millions of good choices made across our land on a daily basis"—emphasizing trade-offs, economic reasoning, and judgments made by individuals, not government mandates. Mr. Carter had demanded "strict conservation," proposed tax penalties on those indulging in the "luxury" of driving large cars, and declared the United States "the most wasteful nation on earth." While U.S. citizens clearly enjoy the highest energy consumption of any country in the world, it will be a solar-powered air-conditioned day in hell before you hear anyone on the Bush team accuse Americans of being wastrels.

AP/World Wide Photos/Richard Drew

Even many Bush critics are soft-pedaling efforts to restrict Americans' personal energy usage again. "Democrats do not advocate energy policies that will require rationing or reductions in our standard of living," states the House Democrats' own energy plan. They seem to recognize that the rhetoric of sacrifice and deprivation was a huge flop in the '70s, and is not likely to work now.

At this point, everybody except libertarians expects the government to do something to ease the current energy crunch. "It needs to be a national effort," says Andrew Lundquist. "We made a decision to have a rational, comprehensive energy policy. There hasn't been one in a long time." At the same time, says Lundquist, both Dick Cheney and George Bush understand that government will not be the solution, and that there are no quick lasting fixes to energy dislocations that developed over decades. So the administration, as Lundquist puts it, "resisted the politically expedient route of price caps" and other short-term measures. "Price caps do nothing to reduce demand, and they do nothing to increase supply," stated President Bush in a May speech in California, as Governor Gray Davis sat stony-faced two seats away.

Environmentalists and liberal politicians insist that energy usage indicates some moral failing on the part of the American people.

The Bushies' opening decision to eschew the easy way out in their national energy plan has already gotten watered down. In the face of relentless Democratic pressure and media drumming, the administration reluctantly accepted partial price controls in California and ten other western states in late June, a sobering reminder that even the most level-headed politicians will often go with the Beltway flow. It must be hoped that this cave-in is an aberration, not a sign of future trends.

But typical White House wishy-washyness, and some air kisses and window dressing (including a number of small and rather pointless subsidies clearly included for political cover), should not detract from the basic merits of the Bush energy plan. The United States' energy infrastructure has indeed become sorely inadequate, with current energy woes often stemming as much from inadequate means of *distributing* energy as from supply shortages. Because government obstacles have created many of these bottlenecks, government leadership will be needed to unclog them.

And new production sources are long overdue: New York state hasn't approved a major electricity plant since the late '80s. California regulators, despite presiding over the state with the largest population increases in the Union, didn't commission a single central electric generating station from 1980 to 2001. It has been 20 years since an oil refinery was built in the U.S., and even longer since the construction of a nuclear power plant. Asked whether the current energy situation amounts to an actual crisis, Andrew Lundquist replies: "You can call it a problem, or you can call it a crisis. If there are poor families that can't afford heat in the winter—that's a crisis."

In a refreshing break from Clintonism, Bush and Cheney haven't ducked hard choices that may be necessary to alleviate today's crunch. They offer: An unblemished Hudson River view, or heat and lights in Manhattan? Scores of new power plants, some of which might be unsightly, or a nation waiting for blackouts to hit? New oil refineries, expanded drilling in Alaska, more offshore oil rigs…or $2 per gallon gasoline yielding rocketing transport and manufacturing costs, and a nation completely dependent on OPEC and other suppliers?

"Energy is critically important to the United States," reminds analyst Charli Coon. "It is the engine that drives our economy. And there is a price to pay for the NIMBY mentality…. George Bush deserves high praise for addressing this issue, and for his candor with the public." Bush and Cheney recognize that Americans cannot have it both ways. They are two grown-ups who expect their fellow citizens to be grown-ups as well. More power to them. And to us.

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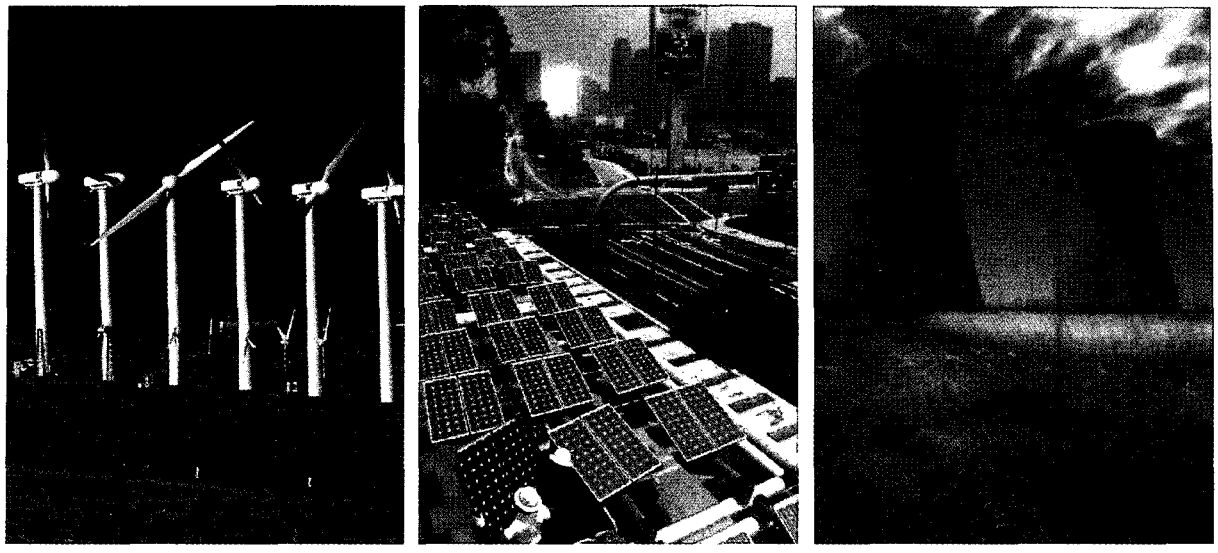

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"Alternative Fuels"?

There is only one that is truly practical. And Greens hate it.

By Mike Oliver and John Hospers

Our peace and prosperity, indeed our very lives, now depend on a continuous supply of energy. Yet most of us give very little thought to how this energy arrives where and when it is needed. Just as many children think that milk comes from the supermarket, many adults think no further about gasoline than that it comes from the service station. They may have heard that windmills, or underground heat sources, or sun rays may be developed to supply power, but they have no idea whether this is truly feasible. Nuclear power, meanwhile, is synonymous to much of the public with nuclear bombs, and thus death and destruction.

Opponents of energy-supply expansion have put the nation in a difficult position today. In California, for instance, they blocked new construction of all contemplated power plants over the last decade. They spread hysteria against nuclear power plants and succeeded in shutting down one near Sacramento and another near San Diego, thereby reducing California's power capacity while its population was rapidly increasing. They harshly criticized power companies of all sorts, and sullied public support for the industry. They set up unfulfillable expectations by hyping "alternative energy" sources. And they blocked access to U.S. oil and gas reserves that exist abundantly off the California coast, as well as in other parts of our country.

As a result, California's power companies could not keep up with the increased statewide demand for electricity, and were compelled to buy electric energy from plants in other states.

Mike Oliver is a physicist and engineer, now retired. John Hospers, emeritus professor at the University of Southern California, was the first candidate nominated by the Libertarian Party for the office of U.S. President.

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Then petroleum and natural gas spiked in price. OPEC reduced its sales on world markets. And natural gas, in the face of sharply rising demand and little new exploration, increased in cost from an average of $2.20 to $6 per million BTUs within the last two years. That meant electric rates had to increase. Unfortunately, thanks to a foolishly incomplete deregulatory scheme, California's power companies could charge their customers only fees set by the state, while having to buy fuel and supplemental electric energy at market prices.

Consequently, California's power companies are facing bankruptcy. State residents must deal with brownouts, blackouts, and grave economic losses. Some industries, fearing loss of electricity for their plants, are reducing production—or scrambling to buy diesel electric generators, which emit far more pollutants per kilowatt-hour than standard power plants, particularly than the much-demonized nuclear units.

A solar plant capable of serving all the electricity needs of a modest city of 1 million would use as much material as the paving of an interstate highway between Boston and L.A.

□

By virtue of alarmist environmental rhetoric and ill-informed media coverage, much of the public has been convinced that we're about to run out of fossil fuels. Actually, the U.S. is an energy-rich country. We have, for instance, the world's largest known coal reserves. It is true, however, that environmentalists are with each passing day making it more difficult to access our reserves.

In 1996, for instance, they succeeded in cutting us off from 68 billion tons of our cleanest coal reserves. Located in Utah, this coal is of a type sought by utility companies to satisfy the EPA's ever-rising requirements. It is worth more than $2.6 trillion after extraction, or more than $9,000 for each man, woman, and child in the United States. Even if all U.S. electric power plants were using coal, 68 billion tons could run them for more than 45 years at the present rate of consumption.

Yet access to this resource was blocked by the Clinton administration on the grounds that mining it would despoil the environment. Thus we are forced to buy coal from overseas sources. Tampa Electric of Florida recently contracted to purchase 400,000 tons of coal per year from Borneo. Along with the coal from Utah, it is among the highest quality on earth. Interestingly, it comes from mines largely owned by the Lippo Group, the Indonesian conglomerate which made a heavy financial contribution to Bill Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign. When Clinton banned the use of those 68 billion tons of coal from Utah, Lippo's equally good coal increased immensely in value.

Doubtless its owners are delighted by this, while U.S. environmentalists gloated about winning another round "to save the planet" when they locked up Utah's coal. If they were consistent they would admit that mining coal in Utah is no more destructive to Mother Earth than mining it in Borneo—indeed, because Borneo's environmental standards are much less restrictive, mining there is very probably more polluting. In addition, many extra pollutants are being discharged by the smokestacks of ships transporting the coal on their 20,000 mile roundtrips from Borneo to Florida. We calculate that some 20 percent more carbon dioxide and other emissions are vented into the atmosphere through this substitution of Bornese for American coal.

In addition to being somewhat dirty to burn, coal can also be dangerous to mine. Thousands of U.S. workers have died in coal mining accidents or of black lung disease in the last century. While it is no longer as dangerous as it was a generation ago, coal extraction remains a hazardous enterprise. And so, while it is still necessary to use coal, it would be desirable to replace it with a safer energy source.

Oil is somewhat less dangerous to extract than coal, but far more hazardous to transport and store. Are we running out of oil? Yes, but not very fast. In 1930 it was widely reported that there was not enough oil left in the U.S. to last us another ten years. Now it is 2001, the world is still awash with petroleum, and it continues to be discovered in many new places. At present rates of consumption we currently have enough oil to last us for at least another 150 years.

Here again, though, tremendous amounts of our own domestic supplies of oil and natural gas have been effectively placed off limits—by environmental rulings from U.S. politicians during the Carter through Clinton eras. As a result, we now have a bare 700 rigs drilling for new oil, instead of the 4,500 that were operating a decade ago.

Our oil companies are not fighting this, but are merely switching their exploration projects to other lands. When we asked an executive of a large oil company why it, for instance, shut off four of its wells just when they were nearly completed, he explained that there were protests by environmentalists against the wells, and that his company follows "a conflict avoidance policy." Accordingly, management decided to concentrate its oil exploration in countries other than the U.S.

Natural gas is often viewed as safer than oil, yet accidents due to leaks in storage tanks, pipelines, and homes are not uncommon and at times result in explosions, deaths, and injuries. And if we consider unlikely worst case scenarios (as is constantly done with nuclear power plants), we should realize that ships loaded with tens of thousands of tons of liquefied natural gas contain as much energy as a sizable nuclear weapon, and have the potential to devastate entire cities.

Whatever energy source we use carries risks. We must always remember, though, that life without abundant and reliable energy would be even harsher and riskier.

The response of environmentalists continues to be that we should harness the sun, the wind, plant biomass, and geothermal energy to heat our homes, energize millions of air conditioners, and run our farms, factories, hotels, and hospitals. At first glance the idea seems appealing enough. Sun and wind are clean, aren't they? Isn't it a matter of just a few years until technology makes these resources affordable and readily available to us all?

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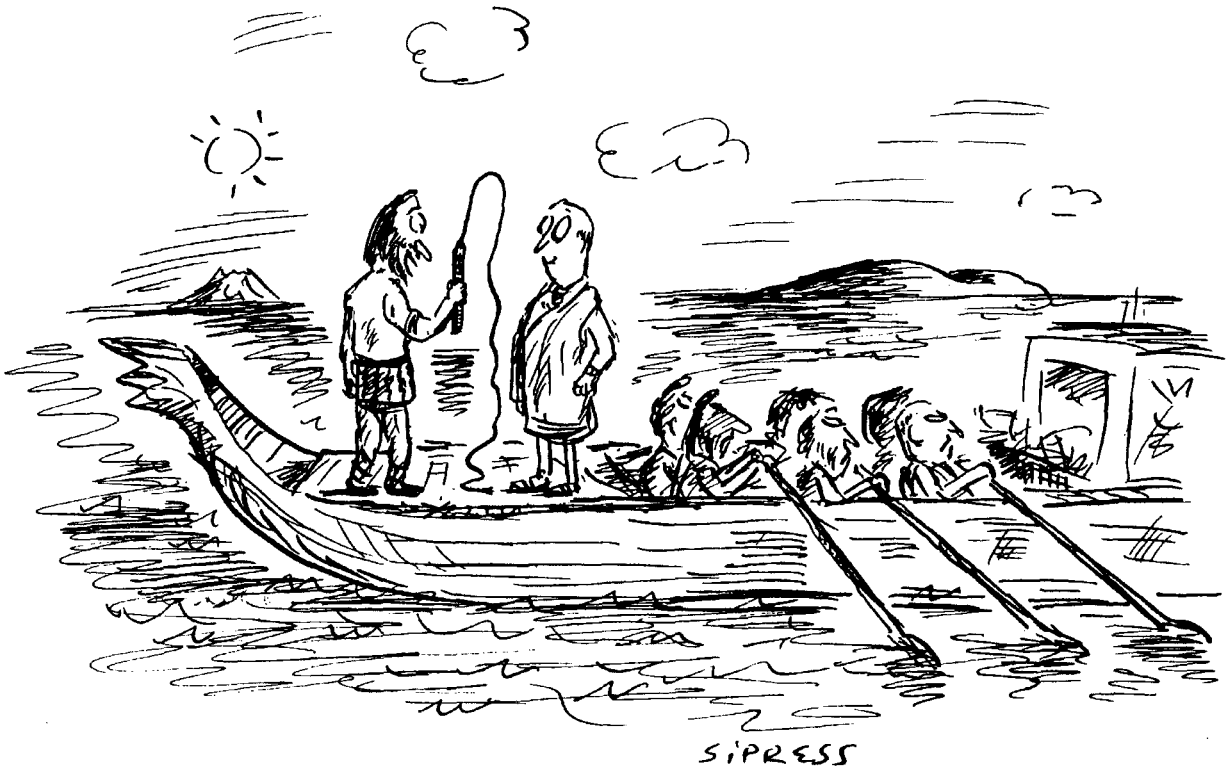

It's an extremely reliable source of energy, and it has no harmful effects on the environment.

Solar energy is useful for energizing the instruments on spacecraft not farther from the sun than Mars. On Earth it can be helpful in minor tasks such as heating water. But it is useless for electrifying cities. The land and construction needs for solar generation are at least 500 times larger than those of fossil fuel or nuclear plants of equal capacity, while requiring far more upkeep and operating costs. This is why not even sunny Israel—or any other nation, anywhere—is using solar electricity except in meager trifles.

Biomass conversion, which would grow plants like sugar cane or corn for conversion into burnable fuels, is also often pushed as a panacea. The nation's industrial, transportation, and other energy needs, however, would require 100 times the calories we currently grow for food consumption. That means that even with our most efficient crops, producing 10 percent of the nation's energy through biomass would require *doubling* the amount of our land being farmed. Total biomass reliance would mandate at least a 20-fold increase in farmland. Where are we going to find the topsoil, water, fertilizer, and human labor to grow that much crop?

As to windmills, they have been used for many centuries, but only for minor functions. A few years back, the U.S. government offered 2-for-1 tax breaks to buyers of wind generators. A person spending $100,000 on a wind generator could get a tax benefit of $200,000 in income. But after a while even avid wind enthusiasts in Congress had to admit that wind generators produce more tax shelters than electricity, so this benefit was curtailed.

It is easy to see why: At a wind speed of 25 miles per hour a 12-foot propeller plus attached generator optimistically produces only 5 kilowatts—the power to operate one electric kitchen range. And with a 12 1/2 miles per hour wind the same generator can produce only 5/8ths of a kilowatt, or 625 watts. On the other hand, a 50 miles per hour wind could produce 40 kilowatts, but would soon destroy the equipment. Clearly, the wind is a fickle source of power.

This is important because advocates persist in quoting *maximum* power outputs of wind generators, without disclosing that this maximum exists only for small, and uncontrollable, intervals. When we hear of a 2 million watt wind generator, we should ask how much energy it provides over a foreseeable time period. Because of their unevenness, even the best wind and solar electric plants are able to produce only 18 to 25 percent of their maximum rated capacity. Meanwhile, nuclear power plants were, by the year 2000, furnishing an average of 89 percent of their maximum power over an extended interval, and fossil plants provide an average of 60 to 70 percent after taking maintenance, upkeep, and other factors into account. In short, a nuclear or fossil plant with a top capacity of 1 billion watts would have to be replaced by wind generators or solar plants with a top capacity of 3 to 4 billion watts. And, again, windmills and solar electric plants require about 500 times more land and construction material per installed watt than fossil or nuclear units.

Geothermal wells are another "alternative" energy supply. The laws of physics dictate that they are suitable for generating electricity only when their steam temperatures exceed 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Unfortunately, few such wells exist in the U.S. Even Iceland, with all its natural volcanic activity, obtains only a small amount of electricity from geothermal sources.

Energy can also be extracted from thermal differences in ocean

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water. In tropical areas, ocean surface water can be 30 or 40 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than deeper water, and heat engines can exploit these gradients. The equipment needed to do this is extremely large, though, compared to the amount of energy produced. Here again the laws of physics dictate notably low efficiencies and high equipment costs in order to exploit the small temperature differences available to heat machines.

Ocean waves and tides are yet another potential source of energy. The problem is that while waves can sometimes carry tremendous force, they are not available on a steady basis. Tides are practical for generating electricity if the differences between high and low levels are sufficient. Some sites where these conditions pertain are currently put to good use. Such locales are not available in large enough number to change the world's energy situation, however.

Pumped storage systems can create a kind of artificial "tide" useable for energy generation. Demand for electricity is far lower at night, and commercial rates are often reduced accordingly. In suitable areas, electric energy is sometimes used during those off hours to pump water from lakes, rivers, or other sources to elevated reservoirs. Then during daytime, when extra power is needed, these reservoirs are gravity-drained through generating turbines to produce electricity. At night, the cycle is repeated.

While pumped storage can be useful for evening out power demands, the systems do not provide free or renewable energy—the energy for moving water up to the reservoirs must come from fossil fuel or nuclear power plants. Moreover, pumped storage systems are costly to build and equip. And only certain sites are appropriate.

Hydroelectric power dams are a preeminent source of renewable, pollution-free, and comparatively inexpensive energy. These facilities are indeed practical. Environmentalists vehemently oppose their construction, however, out of an aesthetic preference for wild rivers, and have even tried to have existing dams breached. In any case, good sites for additional hydroelectric dams are now scarce.

Biomass conversion of plants into burnable fuels would require *doubling* the amount of our land being farmed just to produce 10 percent of the nation's energy.

This leaves us with the final and most touted "alternative energy" source: solar power. The sun provides us with huge amounts of energy, but it comes at a small rate for any given area, so the sun is a low grade energy source. This is more important than the fact that it is omnipresent, and large in total value.

Consider: There are untold millions of tons of gold in the earth's oceans. Why aren't we taking this gold from the seas? It is the dilution that stops us. If we can't obtain at least $8 worth of gold from a ton of water, we will go broke from the costs of extraction. Just as low-grade ore can be abundant yet uneconomic, bankrupting those foolish enough to go after it, many Americans have been misled into believing that low-grade energy can be a bonanza.

You might not think of solar energy as low grade if you are in the Sahara, but even 130 degrees Fahrenheit doesn't compare to the heat in the cylinders of your car, which is 1,000 degrees or more. Wood, coal, oil, and gas may have derived their energy value from the sun, but the energy in them accumulated over long periods of time and their combustion can easily give us 1,000 degrees and even higher temperatures.

On a sunny cloudless day, solar energy comes to earth at a rate of one kilowatt per square meter per hour. This means that if there were no conversion losses for solar power plants, and if the sun shone a reliable eight hours a day throughout the U.S., we could tell the sheiks and ayatollahs where to go with their oil. But there is no energy transfer without loss, and the conversion losses for solar electric plants are, to put it mildly, extreme. As a result, huge areas must be covered with solar collectors to derive even a relatively low amount of useable electricity. This is true whether we use solar energy to produce heat which is converted into electricity, or photovoltaic cells for direct generation. In addition, solar rays are not available at night, and they are often obstructed by snow, dust, and clouds even during daytime. Batteries or stored heat offer a means of stockpiling solar electricity for use during nights or cloudy days—but this is expensive.

The former solar electric plant at Barstow, California illustrates the fiasco of solar electricity with facts and figures. It concentrated solar rays to produce sufficient heat to drive turbo-electric generators. The facility occupied 75 acres of land and contained 1,916 heliostats, each of which was equipped with a moveable platform and reflector, as well as motors and controllers to follow the sun. Accounting for nights, clouds, and equipment maintenance and breakdowns, these heliostats operated an average of only six hours a day.

In its top state, the plant had a capacity of 10 million watts. Yet on average it furnished merely 20 percent of that amount. At ten cents per kilowatt-hour, the plant's total energy output was thus worth only $1,752,000 per year, assuming it generated as much electricity in winter as in summer. Unfortunately, its 850,000 square feet of reflectors needed cleaning once a week, and labor costs on top of other operating, maintenance, and repair expenses, far exceeded the value of the electricity the plant produced. Moreover, the total construction costs for the facility came to a staggering $199,000,000. This means the plant grossed less than 1 percent per year of its cost. In the end, the companies and government agencies which subsidized this project lost so much money they had to shut the plant down.

Putting the entire U.S. on a solar electric regimen would require an initial expenditure of at least $30 *trillion*, plus trillions more each year for upkeep and maintenance. Enthusiasts also overlook the fact that we would need more than 500 times as much construction material (copper, iron, concrete, steel, etc.) to build solar generators as would be required for conventional power plants. All of this would have to be mined, processed, and moved to the solar sites. To bring it there, millions of loaded trucks would roam the highways day and night for many decades. Entire mountain ranges would have to be ripped up to provide the staggering amount

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of gravel, asphalt, cement, metals, etc. required.

Also overlooked is the fact that the mass of receptors, motors, rotating platforms, and reflectors required for a national solar electric system would occupy some 25,000 square miles of land. Much of this would need paving to facilitate access for maintenance. Few creatures could live amidst the jumble. And even more land would have to be continuously disturbed to provide resources for replacement parts to keep the system going.

And then there are the bulky solar devices themselves. Researchers Dixy Lee Ray and Lou Guzzo have totaled up the materials needed to build a solar electric plant with a capacity of 1 billion watts: 35,000 tons of aluminum; 2 million tons of concrete; 7,500 tons of copper; 600,000 tons of steel; 75,000 tons of glass; 1,500 tons of chromium and titanium.

Keep in mind that because fossil and nuclear plants operate at 65 to 89 percent of their maximum capacity on average, while solar electric plants output a mere 20 percent of their capacity on average (because of the intermittency of solar radiation), it would take a solar electric facility having a maximum capacity of at least 4 billion watts to replace a nuclear power plant with a maximum capacity of 1 billion watts. This is yet another point which environmentalists fail to mention when blithely promoting solar power.

Put these various facts together, and the picture is ugly: A solar plant capable of serving all the electricity needs of a modest city of 1 million people would use as much material as the paving of an interstate highway between Boston and Los Angeles. At least 400 square miles of land, filled solid with solar receptors, would be needed just to energize New York City—and this doesn't even consider the problem of clearing the snow off all that land during winter storms. The truth is, even in a sunny locale like Los Angeles, such a system wouldn't work, for its construction and maintenance costs would burden the citizenry with huge principal, interest, and operating costs.

It is easy to see why no nation on earth—none—has gone solar for significant electricity production. Indeed, in the U.S., all "alternative energy" sources *put together* provide us with less than 1 percent of our electric needs, despite government subsidies, grants from large foundations, and a barrage of media support.

Are fossil fuels then our only practical choice? Actually, no. Within the last few decades, one alternative energy source has been developed which is both clean, safe, economic, and virtually limitless in quantity. That source is modern nuclear power.

The problem is, nuclear power has been demonized by opponents. In 1970, for instance, Edwin Newman, one of America's most respected commentators, told an audience of millions on NBC TV that "By the end of the decade our rivers may have reached the boiling point. Three decades more, and they may evaporate. One of the causes of this thermal pollution is the spread of nuclear power

It's Still Dawn for Solar Power

Reprinted, in condensed form, from the* Washington Post, *May 28, 2001:

LOS ANGELES—One year ago this city announced its intent to become "the Solar Capital of the World," with 100,000 roofs covered with solar electric panels by the end of the decade. To fulfill what is perhaps the nation's most ambitious solar campaign, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power began offering substantial subsidies that would reimburse rate payers for half the price of each new solar energy system. For the average home, a photovoltaic package costs between $10,000 and $20,000, parts and labor included, before the rebate.

How many have been installed? At last count, about 40. That leaves only 99,960 rooftops to go. A close examination of the Los Angeles solar experiment and a review of similar programs elsewhere suggest that solar has not proven ready for prime time.

For all of Los Angeles's good intentions, and for all of solar's many positive attributes, the problems of harnessing its power remain. Some of those challenges are economic and some technological; others are more mundane, but often ignored, such as finding a qualified contractor a homeowner can trust to drill dozens of holes in the roof to mount the things.

In the real world, most systems do not pay for themselves in a few years, as some advocates claim, but take 20 years or more to return their initial cost in the form of reduced utility bills. Nor are the systems maintenance-free: At a minimum, the rooftop panels must be routinely cleaned of pollution, dust, and leaves. They cannot be installed efficiently on homes without shade-free, south-facing roofs; the shadow from a neighbor's palm tree can frustrate the system's photovoltaic cells.

Nor will the systems allow buyers to live without an electric supplier, unless they want to purchase a large bank of batteries. Even with the batteries, homeowners probably would not be able to run their washing machines and air conditioners at the same time.

"It is not an economic proposition at this point," conceded Terry Peterson, a solar expert at Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif. But one day, Peterson predicts, 100 years from now, solar energy will provide a substantial percentage of the world's energy needs.

The most knowledgeable and experienced solar contractor in Los Angeles is probably Graham Owen, the founder, owner and single full-time employee of Go Solar Co. His installation of a 1 kilowatt solar electric system on a home in the San Fernando Valley was the first to be awarded a rebate by the Los Angeles power department in March. How many systems has he installed as part of the rebate program? Three.

But Owen is a true believer. On his shelf, Owen still has an unreturned library book, *The Coming Age of Solar Energy*, published in 1963, and checked out from his high school in Lennox Hills, Illinois in 1979. "I guess we're still stuck in the coming age of solar energy," he said, smiling. He recalled that the buzz about solar water heaters in the 1980s led to disappointment with less than spectacular energy savings.

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across the land." Three decades later, the portion of our electricity coming from nuclear power is 30 times more than when Newman uttered those words, yet our rivers are not boiling, nor even perceptibly warmer.

In France, citizens obtain 75 percent of their electricity from nuclear plants, and their rivers remain healthy. The French not only utilize nuclear power heavily, they reprocess the residues from their plants and use them to get more electricity than can be obtained from their initial fuel, uranium. France also reprocesses nuclear residues from other countries and sells electricity to many of them. All the while, tourists flock to the French Riviera, Monaco, and Paris to enjoy vacations there, though vehicles carrying nuclear residues regularly crisscross the surrounding countryside. Visitors admire France's clean environment, never suspecting its true source is non-polluting atomic power generation. Many of the Hollywood celebrities who excoriate nuclear power in their public statements and films—helping feed anti-nuclear feelings among the public—no doubt vacation happily amidst the planet's most nuclearized society.

Because of the unevenness of wind and sunshine, a fossil-fuel or nuclear plant could only be replaced by wind or solar generators having a top capacity *three to four times* bigger.

Nuclear-powered medical devices have routinely been implanted wholly inside the bodies of patients. Many materials we use in our homes, and even eat, contain radioactive isotopes. Even brick buildings, many porcelain dishes, and just flying in airplanes or living high above sea level give us extra radiation, as does treatment or diagnosis by X-rays. It has been said that if X-rays had been discovered in 1995 instead of 1895 environmentalists would never have allowed their development as a medical tool.

Your local hospital probably has a Magnetic Resonance Imaging device, or MRI, which detects tissue aberrations with more precision than other diagnostic tools. Its real name is *Nuclear* Magnetic Resonance Imager. It was pragmatic to omit the 'N' word from the name, to calm the fears of patients who otherwise might have relegated these lifesaving devices to the scrap heap.

Most children today learn of the "terrible accident" that happened at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania in 1979. A film, *The China Syndrome*, premiered at about the time that mishap occurred, cementing the popular impression that nuclear reactors could melt down through the floor of their power plants, through the center of the earth, all the way to China. In reality,

Until recently, there has been little widespread interest in solar electric power. Since 1998, the California Energy Commission has been pushing its own program to encourage homeowners to erect photovoltaic panels on their roofs, offering to subsidize about one-third of the cost. Across a state with a population of about 35 million, only 450 solar energy systems have been installed on homes.

Then the California energy crisis struck, with its power interruptions and steep rate increases, and the phone calls began to overwhelm Owen's voice mail. "On days with rolling blackouts? I get a hundred calls, maybe more," Owen says.

Yet solar power today accounts for only a sliver of the national pie chart of energy production—less than 1 percent. The country produces about 300 megawatts of electricity with solar—about the same amount produced by a single mid-sized traditional power plant.

The current trend for photovoltaics is not to erect large centralized solar farms in the desert, an experiment that withered in the 1980s, but to pursue "distributed generation" or individual units on scattered rooftops. The problem has consistently been the cost of the solar panels, which has been too steep to justify them, except for customers who are committed environmentalists or techies.

Los Angeles began its solar experiment after Sacramento legislators mandated that utilities spend about 3 percent of their revenue on efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy. For solar, the power department committed $75 million over the next five years—enough to subsidize panels on 7,500 homes. The municipal utility would pay between $5,000 and $10,000 of the cost up front—an enticing, tax-free offer.

"For many years, I wanted to do solar, but it was so expensive," said LaWanda Geary in the San Fernando Valley, who in April had Owen install 32 panels for a two-kilowatt system on her sunny roof. "The rebate really got me going. I don't know many times when the government offers to pay half of anything."

Calculations on savings vary. A 2-kilowatt solar system can supply an average-sized home with 20 to 80 percent of its electrical needs, depending on how many lights, appliances and air conditioners are running. After the subsidy, and depending on how the system is paid for (in cash or with borrowed funds), a solar system can pay for itself in as little as six years and as much as 36 years. Owen assumes about 20 years.

Potential solar clients often mistakenly assume that going with the sun will take them off the utility's electric power grid, which is not possible without a large bank of batteries that costs several thousand dollars more. If there is a blackout, the power in a solar house goes off, just like everyone else's. If uninterrupted power is needed, Owen suggests a diesel generator. On cloudy days, and at night, the home is not being powered by solar energy, but getting its electricity the traditional way—from the power lines.

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none of the melted material at TMI escaped the reactor vessel, let alone the floor of the plant and the center of the earth on the way to Asia. In fact, there were no casualties at all at TMI.

What really happened at Three Mile Island? After a malfunction in the equipment, the plant's Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS) acted instantly, as it was designed to do. All would have been well, except the operators turned off the ECCS and committed a series of other blunders, causing part of TMI's fissionable material to melt. None of it escaped the reactor vessel, however, which is exactly why all American (as opposed to Soviet) plants are provided with containment buildings. Even a 100 percent meltdown would be stopped in the containment building of any U.S. plant. In the end, TMI's defenses proved to be more effective than the most amazing errors of its operating crew.

By contrast, errors and mishaps of greater magnitude cause numerous deaths and injuries in other large facilities. How many times were there fires and explosions in coal mines, oil refineries, and natural gas containers? How many people have been killed by fires or carbon monoxide leaks from wood burning stoves?

TMI didn't show that U.S. nuclear plants are unsafe; just the opposite. U.S.-type nuclear plants already provide the safest energy source we have ever had (and next generation plants will be virtually foolproof). A completely unprotected person standing in front of the TMI plant during the entire week of its accident would have received at most 100 millirems of radiation exposure; the average actual dose per nearby resident was only 9 millirems—far less than received from a single chest X-ray. Consider also that the TMI accident took several days to develop, and if there had been any danger, people could have been evacuated. We can hardly say the same about explosions in oil refineries, grain elevators, or homes with gas leaks.

Compare TMI to an accident which occurred about three years ago at the aforementioned Barstow, California solar electric plant. The heat transfer fluid in that solar facility caught fire, and emitted poisonous gas in quantities which prompted the authorities to order the evacuation of the nearby community. In addition, a no-fly zone was ordered in the vicinity of the plant. Neither a forced evacuation nor a no-fly zone was ever needed at Three Mile Island.

Still, we keep hearing about those 9 extra millirems to which TMI residents were exposed during that accident, as if this presented us with a disaster that warrants the shutdown of all our nuclear power plants. If an additional 9 or even 100 millirems are dangerous, why aren't nuclear submarine crews dying like flies? They are allowed 5,000 extra millirems—each year, not just once as happened at TMI. Also, airline crews and passengers receive about 2 millirems every time they fly across the country. Why not shut down the airline companies—especially since not just adults but also small children are thus subjected to extra radiation?

It is true that excessive radiation is indeed very dangerous, but there is overwhelming evidence that there is a level below which radiation does no harm at all. A detailed Johns Hopkins report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy, shows that the overall mortality rate among 30,000 persons exposed to as much as 10,000 millirems per year while working with nuclear ship propulsion systems was *lower* than the mortality rate among another 30,000 persons in a control group who received a more normal amount of radiation of around 300 millirems per year.

The 1986 accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Ukraine was very different from the one at TMI. This might be best understood by comparing the 1988 earthquake in the Soviet city of Yerevan to the 1989 quake that hit San Francisco. Both earthquakes had a magnitude of about 7 on the Richter Scale, but in Yerevan 55,000 people died and the city was completely destroyed, while in San Francisco a similar quake caused only minor damage and few casualties. The difference was that San Francisco used far better materials for its buildings than were used in Armenia. The Soviets did not allow even rebar for their houses—that metal was allocated to "better" applications, such as making more tanks for the Red Army.

Soviet leaders showed little regard for human life, and the Chernobyl plant was not exempt from this. It was built in the first place not so much to provide electricity (as TMI was) as to produce weapons-grade plutonium for nuclear bombs. Prior to the Chernobyl accident, Jane Fonda reportedly claimed that Soviet nuclear plants were better than ours because the Soviets cared about safety, not capitalist profit. She could not have been more completely wrong.

Chernobyl's reactor had *no* containment building, and had a positive void coefficient—that is, rising heat increased reactivity in its nuclear material, causing even more heat to be generated, which in turn caused even higher reactivity. This feedback cycle wrecked the plant, killing people and damaging the surroundings. The overall design was nearly criminally bad.

U.S. plants, by contrast, are equipped with strong containment buildings, designed to release only scant amounts of radiation in case of accident. More importantly, U.S. plants have a negative void coefficient, meaning their reactivity *declines* with heat, and soon is stopped in case of a mishap, as occurred at TMI. Even though the TMI plant was of older design, it underwent only a small self-limiting melting. Plants of newer U.S. and European design are engineered to shut themselves down without *any* melting in case of trouble, even when all safety systems are completely turned off.

The Chernobyl accident was a serious business—difficult, one might suppose, to overstate. Yet one must say in the interests of truth that it has been exaggerated. It was widely predicted in the media shortly after Chernobyl that thousands of people downwind in Russia, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, and parts of Scandinavia would die from nuclear fallout, and that many thousands of reindeer would have to be destroyed. Years passed, and though the press has been silent on the issue it is now clear the predicted downwind catastrophes never happened. People didn't fall ill and die. No lawsuits were won, to our knowledge. There were not even any verified radiation-induced leukemias. Even among ill-protected workers right at Chernobyl itself during the worst days of the Soviet calamity, cancers have been lower than expected.

Vastly superior U.S.-style nuclear power plants, if built in sufficient numbers, can now provide us with inexpensive, efficient, clean energy over an indefinite (one is tempted to say "infinite") period into the future. We must continue to use fossil fuels until such plants become a reality, but the nuclear option is far superior. Compare a billion-watt coal-fired plant with a nuclear plant of the same capacity.

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The coal plant produces 7 million tons of carbon dioxide annually; the nuclear plant produces none. The coal plant produces 12,000 tons of sulfur dioxide; the nuclear power plant produces none. The coal plant produces 20,000 tons of nitrogen oxides; the nuclear power plant produces none. The coal plant emits smoke containing large and small particles (the large particles are filtered out, the small particles, which are more dangerous, are spread over the countryside); the nuclear plant produces neither small nor large smoke particles. The coal plant emits more than 40 different organic compounds; the nuclear power plant emits none. And, ironically, since coal contains shale with traces of uranium, more extra radiation is emitted into the atmosphere each year from burning coal (given the scale on which it is consumed) than comes from all our nuclear power plants.

As for solid waste, the coal plant produces 750,000 tons of it per year; the nuclear plant produces 50 tons (a 15,000-to-one ratio). The coal residues include mercury, cadmium, lead, and arsenic, in loose ash, whereas nuclear residues are sealed in non-corroding stainless steel containers. Much of the remaining radioactive material in nuclear residues can be recycled to produce more electric energy, as is currently done in France and Japan. Reprocessing these residues reduces radioactivity by 97 percent and heat by 98 percent, while allowing extraction of substantial additional energy from the material. Such reprocessing was to be done in the U.S. but President Carter prevented it. Reagan again permitted the recycling, but U.S. companies are hesitant to start the process lest another President responding to nuclear phobias once again reverses course. Properly, most nuclear residues should not be viewed as wastes, but rather as an energy reserve which can last us for many thousands of years.

There are good ways around the problem of handling spent fuel from nuclear reactors, a problem which currently paralyzes American politicians and prevents further nuclear development. Environmentalists, however, strenuously oppose sensible solutions. They were instrumental in dismantling the highly promising Integral Fast Reactor (IFR) at Twin Falls, Idaho. It was designed to produce electric energy by use of nuclear fuel fabricated, used, and reprocessed at the site in a closed circuit, without requiring transportation to or from another plant (discrediting the environmental hysteria about alleged dangers involved in transporting nuclear residues). The IFR was designed to produce as much as 100 times more electric energy per gram of material than existing plants, while having infinitely more advanced safety features. Environmentalist opposition was so fierce, however, that it was never allowed to operate, but was instead torn down under the direction of the Clinton-Gore administration.

Even without recycling, our existing nuclear residues pose no real danger. As Drew Caputo, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, told the *Washington Post*, the nuclear residues currently stored inside each power plant are "actually very safe. There's no scientific reason to ship the stuff off-site." It's true that packaged in their designed containers, spent fuel rods are quite benign left just where they are. Recycling would be even more convenient, economic, and advantageous. And long-term disposal in deep caverns, as has been proposed at Nevada's Yucca Mountain, would also be eminently safe. The point is, nuclear byproducts create no unmanageable dilemma.

Modern nuclear plants can provide us with efficient and clean energy far into the future. Visitors admire France's clean environment, never suspecting its true source is non-polluting atomic power.

□

Energy use has increased in recent generations, but through advanced nuclear power plants we can have immensely more energy available to us than ever before. Nuclear power plants could even safely furnish low-cost electricity for electrolysis of water—yielding the hydrogen needed for energizing fuel cells. We could thereby operate even cars, trucks, airplanes, and ships without fossil fuels, with water (not carbon dioxide) being the only vehicle exhaust. Fuel-cell technology is quickly reaching mass application. But since the hydrogen must currently be produced with electricity derived by using fossil fuels, the technology still leaves us hostage to overseas energy exporters, and does nothing to reduce carbon dioxide production. More clean, all-domestic nuclear power is the only long-run solution to this Catch-22.

Unfortunately, nuclear opponents are blocking America from developing its best energy supply, with ample help from the news media, the entertainment business, and allies in the federal government. The result is that today we have energy shortages rather than surpluses, and are begging the Arabs to sell us more oil.

Modern energy technology could enable us all to live cleaner, longer, richer, and more comfortable lives. But while we've made great progress in recent years in fields like computers, pharmaceutical technology, fiber optics, and the like, we have actually regressed in the field of energy. This despite the fact that energy is the key to everything else we do in our economy and society.

We have become more and more reliant on others for our life-sustaining supplies of power. Today's problems with electricity in California are a mere harbinger of what is in store nationally if we fail to encourage modern, technologically progressive solutions to our energy problems. Our politicians long ago succumbed to environmentalist pressures, and the resulting laws and regulations only compound our dilemma.

We are confused and leaderless today when it comes to energy. The public is easily manipulated by skillful propaganda. This leaves the U.S. in danger. The problem is not that we lack alternatives. We have the technology needed to solve our energy crunch, and an economic system brilliantly capable of sorting out the competing solutions. The main thing we need now is to avoid irrationality and wishful thinking, and political interference in the energy business. This is one problem that science and capitalism can solve—if we let them.

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Deetales Photography/Debbie Chandler

Drill Phobia

Where will America's future energy come from?

By Ben Prendergast

The North Slope of Alaska in early June is infinitely less hostile than it is in January, but almost as featureless. The temperature is in the 30s, and the flat, barren plain stretches, brown and desolate, to the horizon in every direction but north, where it drops into the icy Beaufort Sea under cover of high white clouds. The ground is two inches of mud interspersed with scraggly vegetation and drifts of unmelted snow and ice. The birds have begun to return to the shallow ponds that dot the landscape, many still frozen, but they're the only immediately apparent evidence of life. The greening of the groundcover is still weeks away, as are two other prominent features of the brief summer season—the caribou and the hordes of mosquitoes. This time of year there is no night, no complete darkness, only several hours of twilight in the early morning.

Harsh winter reigns here nine months of the year, with roaring winds and brutal sub-zero temperatures. Despite the adverse conditions, winter is when the majority of the oil field work is done on the Slope, as the tundra is hard and ice roads can be constructed to ferry supplies and equipment to outlying satellite installations and new drilling sites. In a land where thermometers routinely drop to -60 degrees, portable heaters are everywhere, and the roustabouts and roughnecks scurry from warmth to warmth dressed in thickly insulated fire-resistant coveralls.

The DeHaviland Otter waiting to fly us to Phillips Petroleum's Alpine field has *Spirit of Deadhorse* emblazoned on its tail. Evocative of frontier Alaska, perhaps, but not especially inspiring as a motto. From the air, the Alpine field appears as an island in a brown tundra sea. In many respects it is, functioning much like an offshore drilling platform. At a total of 94 acres, it's the smallest oil facility on the North Slope, and the most technologically advanced. The drilling and production facilities are perched atop two gravel pads

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perched atop two gravel pads that insulate the equipment from the permafrost, and by virtue of new horizontal drilling techniques the entire 40,000-acre oil field can be accessed from 110 tightly spaced wells that will branch out from the tiny pads. Already, 20 wells are producing oil.

We land on the causeway joining the pads, which doubles as landing strip and access road, again to minimize the facility's footprint, and are ferried to the office and living quarters. After being issued insulated coveralls, hardhats, safety glasses, and steel-toed boots we step out across the gravel to the plant. Dave Earl, an Alpine manager, leads us through the entire production facility like a proud father, pointing out the next-generation technology with enthusiasm. "This stuff is so cool," he says with a chuckle. His pride is shared by other members of the Alpine crew, who are aware they're practicing the most advanced oil drilling and production in the world.

The Alpine field, which began production only this January, is estimated to contain anywhere from 800 million to 1 billion barrels of oil. Under current technical and economic conditions, Phillips expects to draw approximately 430 million barrels from the reservoir. The extracted petroleum is high grade—a single gravity above diesel fuel in its unrefined state. Earl holds a bottle to the light with a grin. "That's some sweet crude," he says. "You could almost just burn this right in your tank." And it's flowing out even faster than expected.

As we walk, we notice that the entire Alpine production complex is suspended above its gravel pad, to further insulate the tundra. Pilings sunk through the gravel into the permafrost are insulated with sleeves filled with liquid ammonia that dissipate ambient heat. The processing equipment is extremely compact, designed to minimize sprawl.

Great efforts are made to avoid spills. Inflatable plastic pans hang under every vehicle to catch even tiny engine crankcase drips. Phillips environmental consultant Mike Joyce notes that the company reports all leakage, no matter how inconsequential. "We don't want to get caught up in whether it's a quart or a gallon. Ninety percent of the spills are extremely small, and never get off the gravel pad or outside a building." One British Petroleum employee, queried about the frequency of spills, snorts with derision at the talk of catastrophic pollution: "There's more oil spilled in the parking lot of your average Wal-Mart."

All waste at Alpine, from the drilling mud used to pressurize the wells to other industrial as well as personal trash, is ground into a paste and injected back into wells, thousands of feet down. The goal, says environmental coordinator Tom Manson, is to leave behind little evidence of industry.

The most remarkable feature of the Alpine facility, however, is the drilling rig. Operated by Alaska's Doyon firm, which specializes in arctic exploration, the rig employs horizontal drilling in a way not seen before on the North Slope. From this single location, innumerable wells can be bored horizontally to any point of the compass within five miles. Employing an advanced bit and directional drilling motor, the course of the hole can be altered in progress. Sophisticated sensors send impulses back though the drilling mud indicating the location and status of the bit. These are interpreted by computers and technicians in the control room who can make instant adjustments. This has immensely speeded up the drilling process, made it more accurate, and allowed access to vast underground areas without creating the sort of industrial disruption seen on the surface in the past. At the time of our visit the crew was boring a 72-degree hole three miles down and out.

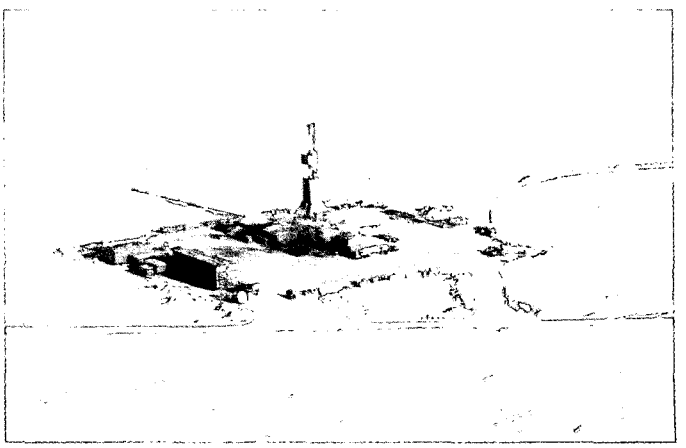
"We're going to be doing some real neato stuff here on this pad," says Don Mickey, Phillips' representative on the rig, with a grin. The technician in charge of the drilling system states in a thick northern England accent that despite his years of service on drilling rigs around the world, he is still impressed by the technology he currently commands. "Ten years ago," he says, "we wouldn't have dreamed of doing this. Now 75 percent of all wells are directional."

Alpine is the template for future oil exploration and production on Alaska's petroleum-rich northern rim. Just such high-tech, environmentally sensitive rigs would be used, on a handful of sites, if Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—the most promising oil resource left in North America—were opened to oil exploration. But that's a political decision, and for the present at least, the political will does not exist in Washington to even meaningfully debate opening ANWR.

In 1973, the U.S. imported some 35 percent of its oil. Now it's almost 60 percent—and a 1973-style foreign supply interruption would have catastrophic consequences.

In October 1973, amidst hostilities between Egypt and Israel, Arab OPEC nations imposed an oil embargo on the U.S. and several other western countries. Supplies were reduced month by month in an effort to bring pressure on the U.S. and thus the Israelis. The price of gasoline skyrocketed, supplies were rationed, and long lines at filling stations became commonplace. National transportation and economic production was reduced to a crawl. At times, gas stations simply had no fuel to offer, and had to post "No gas today" signs.

In early November, only weeks into the embargo, President Nixon urged in an address to the nation, "Let us set as our national goal, in the spirit of Apollo, with the determination of the



Island Atop the Permafrost Oil companies have adapted the model of the offshore oil rig to turn their terrestrial drilling platforms (this is the Alpine field) into small, clean, self-contained specks amidst vast acreage that remains untouched.

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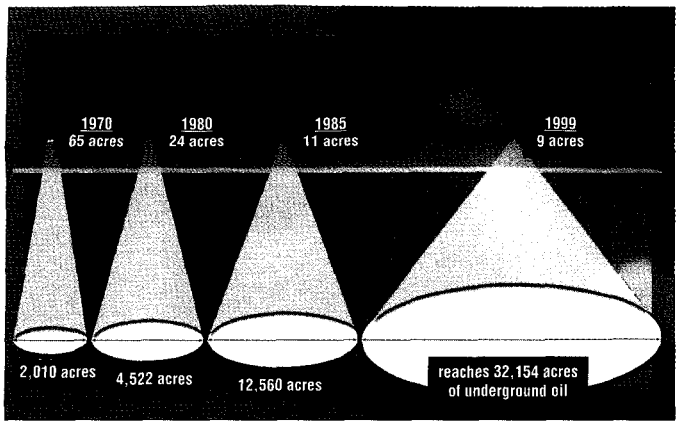

Third-Generation Drilling Technology Using directional, or slant, drilling, firms can now tap huge areas from a minuscule surface footprint.

developed the potential to meet our own energy needs without depending on any foreign energy source." Editorial pages burst with calls for conservation and increased domestic oil production.

Well, guess what? In 1973, the U.S. imported some 35 percent of its oil. At present, almost 60 percent of our supplies come from abroad. U.S. national security is now more threatened than ever before by dependence on foreign oil. A 1973-style supply interruption today would have catastrophic consequences for our quality of life and our economy.

Canada, currently the United States' most secure foreign oil source, is likely to remain a stable and assured supplier, but the majority of our other exporters are politically precarious nations. The Middle East is as worrisome as ever, perhaps more so, with Israel again enveloped in strife and Islamic fundamentalism on the rise. Iran's political and religious leaders are clashing, as they did in 1979, when the fall of the Shah sent a secondary quake through world petroleum markets. Venezuela, the single largest seller of crude to the U.S., is currently governed by a president rhetorically hostile to America. He recently called for cooperation with Cuba, China, Libya, and other states to "resist American hegemony." Meanwhile, Colombian guerrillas have repeatedly sabotaged the critical Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline this year, reducing export flows. And in Indonesia, Exxon was recently forced to abandon natural gas fields due to guerrilla attacks. Instability in other parts of that country is also compromising oil production.

As the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Robert Ebel said in testimony before Congress in the spring of last year, a refusal to explore for oil and gas domestically, "means we have given up on ourselves. We have agreed to place our future well-being in the hands of nation-states whose national interests may not always coincide with ours."

It is our second June day on the North Slope, the sky has begun to darken, the wind has risen, and we dig out parkas and gloves. From the isolated speck that is Alpine we fly to the Kuparak field. If Alpine represents fourth-generation oil drilling technology, Kuparak is second-generation. Compared to Prudhoe, where the techniques of arctic oil extraction were pioneered in the 1970s, the 1980s Kuparak facilities are more compact and advanced. But next to Alpine, even those methods seem sprawling and crude.

A basic facility for separating oil from the water and gas that rise to the surface with it used to take up 65 acres. Today, it averages nine. Separate wells used to be drilled no closer than 150 feet apart. Now they can go in at a spacing of ten feet. The cumulative result is that oil production facilities are much less intrusive than they were just a few years ago.

On the other side of Kuparak lies Prudhoe proper. The transition is dramatic. Prudhoe is a large complex that looks like some Midwestern industrial facility. The entire Alpine facility could fit on a fraction of the pad that supports Prudhoe's gas treatment plant alone. There are roads, processing centers, equipment depots, and modular housing for the personnel who rotate in and out on two-week shifts. There are no schools, no families, no permanent residents.

While not exactly picturesque, the advantage of already having Prudhoe on the North Slope is that a great deal more new oil production could be supported without much new construction. Prudhoe serves as a central headquarters for many vendors and technical firms, has air and marine terminals, and overnight

Media About-Face on ANWR

By Michael Gaianzaro

The editorial pages of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* currently propound the idea that opening a small portion of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for oil and gas drilling would despoil a pristine wilderness. Yet, at one time, both papers argued *against* that shibboleth. Not so long ago, scribes at both the *Times* and *Post* penned editorials in which they debunked with eloquence and common sense the arguments they enthusiastically champion today.

In 1988, the *Times* and *Post* actually supported the recommendation of Reagan Interior Secretary Don Hodel that opening ANWR could reap immense benefits with little or no environmental damage—the same argument now made by President Bush. In an editorial on June 2, 1988, the *Times* noted that "the potential [of ANWR] is enormous and the environmental risks are modest...the likely value of the oil far exceeds plausible estimates of the environmental costs.... Some members of Congress believe that no damage at all is acceptable. But most are ready to accept a little environmental degradation in return for a lot of oil.... It is hard to see why absolutely pristine preservation of this remote wilderness should take precedence over the nation's energy needs."

The *Times* heaped expansive praise on oil drilling in Prudhoe Bay and Alaska's North Slope. "The North Slope development has been America's biggest test by far of the proposition that it is possible to balance energy needs with sensitivity for the environment," the editorial closed. A year later, on March 30, 1989, the *Times* warned against using the Exxon Valdez oil tanker crash as a pretext for leaving ANWR untouched. "Washington can't afford...to treat the accident as a reason for fencing off what may be the last great oilfield in the nation."

Is this the work of a *Times* impersonator? Such words cannot be squared with this anti-ANWR screed written on January 31 of this year: "Mr. Bush's plan to open [ANWR] is as environmentally unsound and intellectually shaky as it was when Ronald Reagan suggested it 20 years

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facilities. It has a seawater treatment plant. It sits at the top of both the 489-mile Dalton Highway and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, which carry supplies in and out. New fields can thus be brought on line with only comparatively modest amounts of planning, investment, and tundra space.

During its peak throughout the 1980s, Prudhoe sent more than 1.5 million barrels of oil down the Alaska pipeline every day. Production began to decline at the close of the '80s, and this threatens to make some facilities obsolete in the near future. If fresh North Slope exploration and production don't continue, the whole Prudhoe complex could become uneconomic to operate, resulting in a massive and costly shutdown. Energy production from America's Arctic would come to an abrupt end.

The small section of ANWR set aside years ago for potential oil exploration is the richest oil resource left in North America.

Lonnie Brooks, a geophysicist with Geoarctic Consultants, oversaw the only seismic surveys ever conducted in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, in the winter of 1984-85. The surveys were conducted in the small fraction of the reserve specifically earmarked for oil assessment when the refuge was established in 1980. Known as the 1002 area, it encompasses 1.5 million acres on the northern edge of ANWR's total 19 million acres.

Brooks says his survey indicates strongly that there are significant undiscovered petroleum reserves in the 1002 area. "Even the surface expressions of the rocks there indicate the presence of petroleum," says Brooks. "I mean, you can chip a chunk off and smell the oil. So the oil has been in those rocks, there's no question about that. Just to the west of ANWR, at Prudhoe Bay, is where the largest oil discovery in North America was made, and just to the east the Canadians have made tremendous gas finds in the Mackenzie River delta. So it's surrounded on both sides by highly productive areas."

In 1998, the initial data gathered by Brooks' team was reinterpreted by the U.S. Geological Survey, raising the estimated number of barrels in the reserve to as much as 16 billion. Brooks, who is in a better position than almost anyone to know, hints that even these figures are likely to be low-end estimates. "There are a lot of reasons to suspect that if we went back in there and did some more intensive exploration we'd find oil in large producible quantities," says Brooks. "In the 1998 reassessment, under an administration hostile to the effort, they came up with even higher estimates of oil potential." Asked to compare ANWR to potential oil deposits in other parts of the U.S., Brooks says flatly, "The most prospective place left in the United States is in the ANWR." Or as one employee of a firm now exploring in Alaska puts it, "The 1002 is the big enchilada."

The evolution of seismic technology provides an opportunity to dramatically reascertain the oil potential of ANWR. With the advent of three-dimensional seismic surveying, geologists are now able to walk through virtual representations of geologic formations. The amount of data the 3-D surveys provide, compared to the 2-D surveys Brooks used to evaluate ANWR almost 17 years ago, is often compared to the difference between an X-ray and a CAT-scan. The new imagery provides a wealth of fresh detail, and has led to dramatic increases in the success rate of test drilling. Whereas exploratory wells used to come up dry as often as nine times out of ten, today many companies are finding producible oil in 80 percent or more of their shots into the dark.

In this year's budget, the Bush administration has requested the means for a careful 3-D survey of ANWR so its true potential can be accurately assessed. Environmentalist opponents in Congress, however, are in the process of stripping out any such funding. They'd apparently rather not know too many specifics about the reserves; the results, they realize, are likely to be oily. So this summer Congress will officially go on record in favor of ignorance and obscurantism.

ago and when Mr. Bush's father suggested it a decade ago." With the self-righteous indignation that we have come to know so well, the new *Times* suggested "it is outrageous for [supporters of drilling in ANWR] to clamor for access to the pristine lands of the refuge.... The relatively trivial amounts of recoverable oil in the refuge cannot possibly justify the potential corruption of a unique and irreplaceable natural area."

Apparently the *Washington Post* editorial board experienced a similar conversion. On December 25, 2000, the *Post* stated in an editorial titled "Protect the Refuge" that President Bush "would have a hard case to make" in proving that "the oil to be gained is worth the potential damage to this unique, wild, and biologically vital ecosystem."

Yet in 1987, the *Post* could not have been more emphatic in exposing the environmental myths propagated about ANWR. ANWR "is one of the bleakest, most remote places on this continent," wrote the *Post* and there is hardly any other area where drilling would have less impact on surrounding life..."

Back then, the *Post* noted that decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil was sound environmental policy. "If less is to be produced here in the United States, more will have to come from other countries. The effect will be to move oil spills to other shores. As a policy to protect the global environment, that's not very helpful," the paper stated on April 4, 1989.

These dramatic shifts in opinion are absurd. Even if the nation's energy situation had improved over the years instead of getting worse, that would not reconcile the contradiction of claiming now that ANWR is a treasure, after noting a decade earlier that drilling there would have less ecological impact than almost anywhere else on earth.

The fact is, ANWR is and always has been bleak and remote. Unfortunately, something has changed over the last decade which prevents our nation's most influential editorialists from admitting what they once recognized without difficulty.

Michael Catanzaro is a political reporter for Evans and Novak. *An earlier version of this article appeared in* National Review Online.

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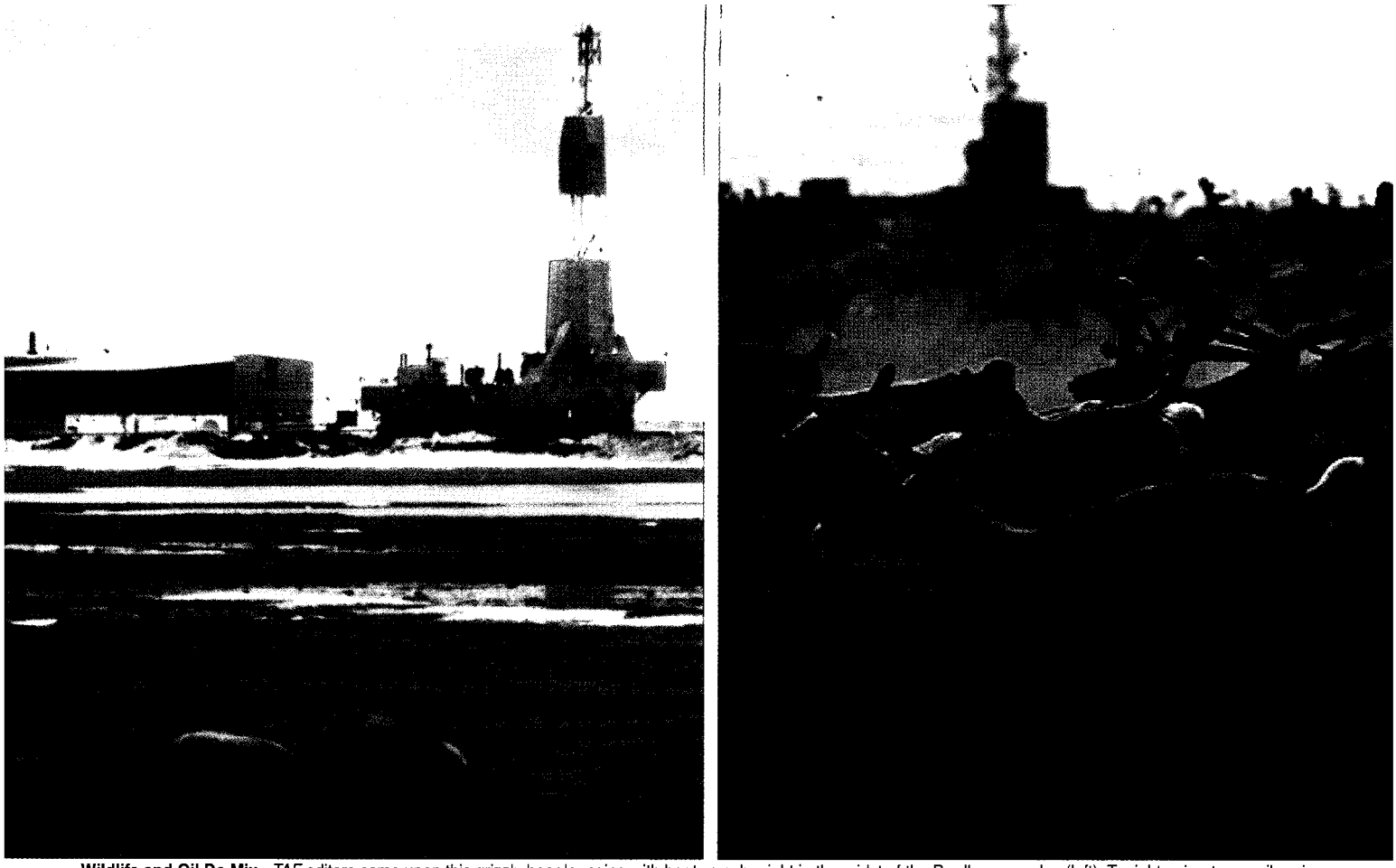

Wildlife and Oil Do Mix *TAE* editors came upon this grizzly bear lounging with her two cubs right in the midst of the Prudhoe complex (left). To right, migratory caribou in front of a drilling rig.

Despite its industrial aspect, Prudhoe hosts animal life without apparent disruption. In the course of two days, we spied a grizzly sow with two cubs lounging next to a major processing center; an arctic owl dining on some species of rodent amidst a grid of pipelines; an arctic fox crossing a gravel road on the hunt; and innumerable birds, from arctic terns and ptarmigan to enormous tundra swans, right beside the oil facilities.

The caribou that calve in the Prudhoe area, known as the Central Arctic herd, have actually increased dramatically in number since the arrival of the oil industry—from 6,000 animals 30 years ago to nearly 30,000 today. While there is no reason to think that oil patch activity has caused this increase, it obviously hasn't harmed the creatures. This caribou explosion sharply contradicts one of the prime environmentalist arguments against exploration—that drilling might spook the creatures from their calving grounds. To Mike Joyce, who spent 27 years on the North Slope studying its resident animal populations, that is faulty thinking. "After 30 years of oil production," he says, "our caribou herd is the largest it's ever been.... How much evidence can you ask for?"

Joyce reports that other wildlife populations in the immediate area of Prudhoe are on the increase as well. In addition to the prospering caribou, long-term studies of the grizzly bear, arctic fox, tundra swan, seven or eight species of ducks and

Eskimos to DC: Open ANWR!

By Deroy Murdock

About the only people absent from the media discussion of oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have been Alaska's Eskimos. Within ANWR's 19.6 million acres, Eskimos own 92,000 acres of private property which they would like to lease for oil and gas production.

"We feel as if we are a colony and that the imperial powers are dictating to us," Inupiat Eskimo Donald Olson, M.D. tells me by phone. "We've got a right here that is being infringed upon by the federal government. We are being held as economic hostages by people from the lower 48 who never have been to Alaska or the North Slope." Olson states that oil companies "have had 30 years of environmentally sensitive dealings with us. We anticipate this will be the same way."

Olson, a Democratic state senator who practices general medicine, notes that his constituents in Kaktovik (pop. 256) "do not have running water or a sewer system. That means they are relegated to Third World conditions where people have to melt ice to bathe and to drink. They use five-gallon honeypots for sanitation." This absence of flush toilets causes sometimes-fatal cases of hepatitis A and contributes to high infant mortality rates.

Olson and other Eskimos attribute what progress they are making exclusively to job creation and income generated from oil operations at nearby Prudhoe Bay. Says Olson's chief of staff, John Jemewouk: "The standard of living has increased dramatically in the last 30 years since

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geese, and all the shorebirds have found, according to Joyce, "that all of those populations are healthy and stable, and some are growing." For the few species in decline, "the stress is coming from elsewhere," says Joyce, "particularly, in the case of the birds, in disruption of their habitat in the lower 48 states." For the record, there are no endangered species in ANWR, and the subsistence-hunting native village closest to the 1002, Kaktovik, is firmly in favor of exploration and development.

The caribou living around the existing oil rigs have increased dramatically in number over 30 years, contradicting environmentalist claims.

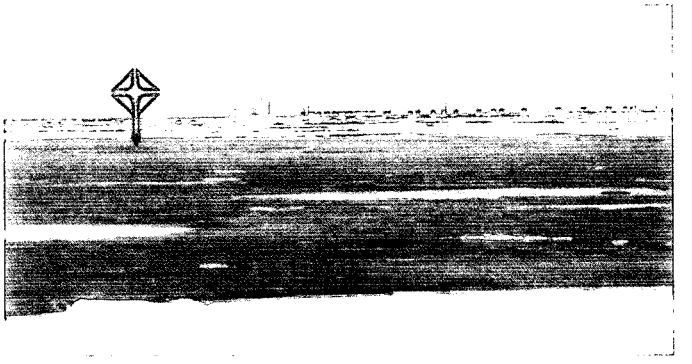
Contrary to popular images, oil drilling is not the ecological nightmare opponents like to project. In truth, importing oil in tankers is considerably riskier for the environment. The reality is that oil production is currently taking place in wildlife refuges all across the United States. Rigs have been operating for nearly 60 years, for instance, in Florida's Big Cypress National Reserve, in the immediate vicinity of the Everglades National Park. In Louisiana, there are more than 1,600 oil and gas wells in wildlife refuges. Some have actually operated on land owned and leased to oil companies by the Audubon Society. Across the country, the Fish and Wildlife Service allows drilling in more than 20 wildlife preserves and refuges.

In each case, oil and gas development peacefully co-exists with wildlife preservation. Indeed the financial bounties (and, in the case of offshore rigs, the fact that the platforms function as a kind of artificial ocean reef) have actually helped *improve* the status of the flora and fauna in many areas where oil is produced. Considering that most of this successful existing development is of older vintage and does not employ the advanced technology that now allows small footprints and relatively gentle methods of extraction, it's completely irrational to argue that future oil and gas production cannot co-exist with ecological health.

The drilling that takes place in the refuges mentioned above has happened because the rights to the minerals beneath the land on which the refuges rest are in private hands. The subsurface rights in ANWR, on the other hand, are, except for a small parcel of native lands, under government control. This has allowed the issue to become a political football.

The only place exploratory drilling has taken place in ANWR is in the native-owned Kaktovik area on the northern fringe of the refuge. But discoveries there are currently useless, because there is no way of transporting any produced oil or gas without crossing federal lands. The mineral rights to the rest of the 1002 area remain under federal jurisdiction. So despite strong support for exploration from the state of Alaska, area natives, and petroleum geologists, opponents of energy production have so far scared Congress out of allowing any access to what is likely the richest oil resource in North America.

What makes the locking up of ANWR even more significant is that the same pattern is being repeated almost everywhere else in the country. To a remarkable degree, opponents have scared politicians out of allowing access to *any* of America's most promising unexplored oil and gas regions. The options for high-potential exploration have been evaporating on an almost daily basis, for entirely political reasons. In just the last few weeks and months, Congress has acted to bar exploration off the coast of Florida, under the waters of the Great Lakes, and in national monuments (many of them



Blight or Bonanza? Tundra exactly like this stretches, barren and featureless, for mile after mile across northern Alaska. Picturesque it ain't. Here, the ARCO symbol marks the first well that discovered oil in Prudhoe Bay, announced March 12, 1968. Other wells and a processing plant sit in the background.

the oil companies came to Alaska." He explains that Eskimos have used petroleum royalties and tax revenues to manage caribou herds more effectively, raising their numbers six-fold.

Such benefits have earned ANWR development widespread support among the roughly 8,000 Eskimos who populate Alaska's North Slope Borough, an 89,000 square mile, Minnesota-sized county. A January 2000 survey of Kaktovik residents found that 78 percent favor opening ANWR while only 9 percent are opposed. (Visit www.kaktovik.com for details.) The Alaska Federation of Natives, representing some 80,000 Eskimos, adopted a resolution in 1995 calling for opening ANWR as a "critically important economic opportunity for Alaska Natives."

Those who want to keep ANWR closed may expect the Eskimos to find other work, but their options are highly limited. "We have the most to lose if ANWR is not open," says the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation's Tara Sweeney, a native of Barrow, America's northernmost town. "Our land provides the critical connection with our ancient culture and traditions that is necessary for our spiritual well being," says ASRC chairman Jacob Adam. "And, in the form of jobs and tax revenues from the petroleum industry it supports, our land provides the opportunity for economic security, self-determination, and freedom."

Environmentalists portray ANWR as an ecological Louvre whose treasures must be defended vigorously from Dick Cheney and his white, male pals in Big Oil. But in addition to the caribou and eider ducks, U.S. citizens live in ANWR. Their voices should be a key part of this debate.

Deroy Murdock is a TAE *contributing writer.*

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so-designated by the departing Clinton administration in midnight decisions) in the Rockies and elsewhere.

And it isn't only Congress doing the obstructing. In California, a state judge ruled in June that the state could unilaterally halt all new exploration, and even development of existing leases, in waters off the central coast. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently ruled in favor of a ban on exploration on National Forest lands in Montana on account of their "value and spirituality of place." The mere suggestion of studying oil and gas exploration off the Eastern Seaboard brought such vocal opposition from environmentalists and their allies this spring that the Bush administration summarily abandoned plans for research.

This sort of absolute opposition to any form of energy development has gone beyond the well-known phenomenon of NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard"). The new protests can be characterized as BANANA ("Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone"), or, the ultimate in obstructionist acronyms, NOPE ("Not On Planet Earth"). These are comic terms, but the knee-jerk opposition to resource development they describe is no laughing matter for the nation.

America is far from exhausting its native energy resources; enormously valuable reserves of natural gas and oil remain in numerous locations across our continent. Consider the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Florida. The U.S. Minerals Management Service estimates that the eastern Gulf off the Florida panhandle is home to some 2 billion barrels of oil and 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The Destin Dome, a single reservoir 25 miles offshore from Pensacola that has undergone preliminary exploration by Chevron to the tune of $100 million, is estimated to contain more than 2.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Reports issued by the EPA and the Interior Department in April concluded that exploring for natural gas in the Dome posed no significant threat to the overall environment or Florida's beaches. Even a theoretical catastrophe at a natural gas rig would simply result in

Gas Pains— How imagined harm to a falcon, a cactus, and a dirt trail has prevented 70 billion cubic feet of natural gas from reaching energy-starved Californians

By Michael Catanzaro

On the surface, the Orogrande Basin, situated just north of the Texas-New Mexico border, is nothing more than desert and grasslands. But beneath the dust and rock lies a potential bonanza of oil and natural gas, which could help California and other states overcome severe energy shortages. For years, the Harvey E. Yates Company (HEYCO) has tried to tap those rich reserves. It has failed, but not for lack of trying.

Experts say the basin potentially holds over a trillion cubic feet of natural gas. HEYCO, based in Roswell, New Mexico, is one of several independent companies exploring the basin's thousands of square miles. After years of study and persistence, HEYCO found gas in a section called the Bennett Ranch Unit. Based on extrapolations from existing wells, company president and CEO George Yates says the area could hold about 70 billion cubic feet of natural gas—a significant find with a possible gross value of around $300 million.

HEYCO's investment, however, lies beneath federal lands, which are so tightly regulated that drilling became costly and highly impracticable. "I was more than willing to assume the geologic risk involved in this project," says Yates, who estimates that the company initially had about a 3 percent chance of making the discovery. "But I certainly didn't want to take on the government risk." After spending enormous time and overhead finding the resource, Yates must now deal with bureaucrats, allied with environmentalists, who obstinately block his every move. Any disruption, no matter how minor, to the rock- and dirt-strewn plain has been vigorously opposed. That means no drilling for natural gas—even though it is badly needed by the nation, and the hard work of finding it has already been accomplished.

HEYCO's ordeal exemplifies the absurdities of current federal land policy. Strict, reaching, often bizarre enforcement of laws like the Endangered Species Act have essentially created zero tolerance for energy production in many places. The Endangered Species Act in particular has become a weapon of choice for anti-energy types because it is entirely inflexible. Any hint of a rare plant or animal nearby can make drilling extremely inconvenient and costly. For five years, the Act has been wielded quite effectively to block HEYCO from developing its signed federal gas leases.

The ESA wholly overrides the government's professed commitment to multiple uses of federal lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act established multiple use with the clear intent of developing the nation's natural resources. Officially, federal lands are supposed to be leased to companies like HEYCO, in recognition of the country's "need for mineral resources," whenever "a particular parcel will serve the national interest."

But as Yates explains, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), especially under the Clinton Administration, has applied an entirely new interpretation of the law. It sees "resources" not as valuable hydrocarbons, but as scenic vistas that hikers encounter along dirt trails. Environmentalists insist that "oil and gas development just does not belong" on most stretches of federal land (as a representative of the Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Alliance put it).

Environmentalists and their bureaucratic allies hate the aesthetics of drilling—the lumbering machines, pipelines, trucks, entrepreneurial wildcatters, and workmen in hardhats. So they impose onerous stipulations to obstruct drilling as much as possible. "Oil and gas leases are supposed to give you leeway to get to the natural resources," Yates notes. But when it comes to the feds, "in practice, access to the land is denied, or that right becomes so modified that it's impossible to drill."

HEYCO found out the hard way. In 1996, with federal leases in hand, the company began drilling discovery wells, and soon after, expensive seismic surveys of several areas within the Bennett Ranch Unit. Then they applied for drilling permits for four wells. An initial discovery well contained 3 billion cubic feet of natural gas. Based on geologic extrapolations, HEYCO determined that the surrounding area could hold up to 25 times more.

For over three years since then, HEYCO has fought tooth and nail to

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methane bubbling to the surface and mixing into the atmosphere (as it does every day in enormous quantities, via sources ranging from volcanoes to cattle). Yet, the Florida political leadership, of both parties, chose to ignore the research, and insisted somewhat hysterically that drilling would pose an unimaginable threat to the tourist industry.

Another potential energy treasure chest within the continental U.S. is the Great Lakes region. But NIMBY, BANANA, and NOPE forces are mobilizing against a Bush administration suggestion that the deposits be examined. In the face of activist protests, the House of Representatives voted at the end of June to forbid the Army Corps of Engineers from granting leases under the Great Lakes. Politicians in seven of the eight Great Lakes states supported the ban; only Michigan Governor John Engler resisted. A frustrated Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX) complained of "obstructionism" that is part of "a broader effort to systematically choke off every promising source of domestic energy."

"There is no amount of oil under the Great Lakes worth putting one-fifth of the world's fresh water at risk," orated Rep. David Bonior (D-MI). Ignored amidst the emotional rhetoric is the fact that Canada has done extensive drilling on the northern shores of the lakes, in particular around Lake Erie, without a single significant spill. Michigan, too, has had oil wells in operation since 1979 along Lakes Huron and Michigan, with no adverse environmental effects. Moreover, the actual method of extraction proposed for most parts of the Great Lakes doesn't employ offshore rigs at all. Just as at the Alpine Field, the reserves under the lakes could be accessed from shore by slant drilling, but environmentalists are just as adamantly against this.

And it isn't only drilling under the lakes that stirs up furor. Proposals to lay natural gas pipelines between New York and Canada across the floor of Lake Erie, and between Wisconsin and Indiana along the bed of Lake Michigan, have also been attacked fiercely. Opponents insist that the pipelines will stir up pollutants buried in lake sediment and foul the water.

gain access to the gas they found. After numerous consultations, meetings, and exchanges at the local, state, and federal levels, the company received conditional approval for additional drilling. But as George Yates explained, "the conditions attached really made it impossible for us to drill."

Signs of trouble began in July 1998. First, federal officials informed Yates that the Fish and Wildlife Service was conducting a time-consuming environmental assessment searching for potential harm to any endangered species. Russell Jentgen, a Bureau of Land Management geologist, notified HEYCO that work in the stipulated areas could very well disturb the habitat of the Aplomado falcon. HEYCO's vice president, Steve Yates, was immediately suspicious, not least because a geologist was making determinations about endangered wildlife. Moreover, the falcon was not known to be in the area regularly. Yates believes that about "six or seven" falcons had been sighted in the last 50 years. BLM officials offered no documentation or concrete evidence of falcon whereabouts. Mike Howard of the Las Cruces BLM initially said he saw one of the birds, but retracted that statement when challenged by HEYCO. "We asked the BLM to show us where the falcons were spotted, and who spotted them," Yates said. "But they never did."

Two months later, Steve Yates met with Linda Rundell, a BLM field supervisor. Rundell presented Yates with onerous restrictions on HEYCO's future operations. Probably the most egregious was a proposed prohibition on all drilling activities during the raptor breeding season from January to July. "Those [restrictions] essentially come down to a timing issue," said Steve Yates. "It becomes so difficult to comply with them that it's just not worth drilling anymore."

After months of back-and-forth between HEYCO and BLM officials, Tim Sanders, New Mexico's acting BLM director, called Steve Yates and said the drilling permits would be approved only with exceptions. The Fish and Wildlife Service demanded that HEYCO adopt a routine policy of surveying for any migratory bird nests every year from March through August. Upon discovery of a nest, HEYCO was required to remove any equipment within a quarter-mile. And HEYCO's drilling is to cease immediately in the event of any Aplomado falcon sighting.

HEYCO vehemently, but unsuccessfully, objected, pointing out that multi-million-dollar investments could not be made when faced with threats of instant shutdown. In November 1998, Sanders said he could attach language to the drilling permits requiring HEYCO to follow the Migratory Bird Treaty. A month later, the BLM changed course again. HEYCO was required to give the agency three weeks' notice before moving any dirt near its work sites. The Fish and Wildlife Service would then check the area for any potential disturbances to the Aplomado habitat. In effect, as BLM officials knew, this provision would have made developing the gas field completely unfeasible.

To make matters worse, HEYCO encountered opposition to the pipeline it needed to bring its gas to market. The BLM complained that HEYCO's proposed pipeline would trample some yucca, and could contribute to "grassland habitat fragmentation." On top of that, HEYCO found that its pipeline would cross the "Butterfield Trail," a 19th-century mail and stagecoach route. The trail extends merely six miles into New Mexico, and much of it is already buried under a ranch road.

To this day, the BLM still has not approved the pipeline. "As we found out," George Yates explains, "an approval to drill does not mean you have permission to produce. Without that pipeline, that is exactly what is happening to us." And happening to other companies all over the American West. As an expert on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee states, Yates' experience "is all too common on federal lands. I hear from independent producers all the time about how bureaucrats use regulations to make oil and gas exploration next to impossible."

President George W. Bush recently implemented an executive order directing federal agencies to speed up energy production. While the move was welcome, it has so far done little for producers such as HEYCO. "Bush has the right idea," said George Yates, "but that order hasn't made much of a difference. Federal bureaucrats in local offices simply take matters into their own hands. They delay and let time go by. In the end, they just don't care what happens."

Michael Catanzaro is a political reporter for Evans and Novak.

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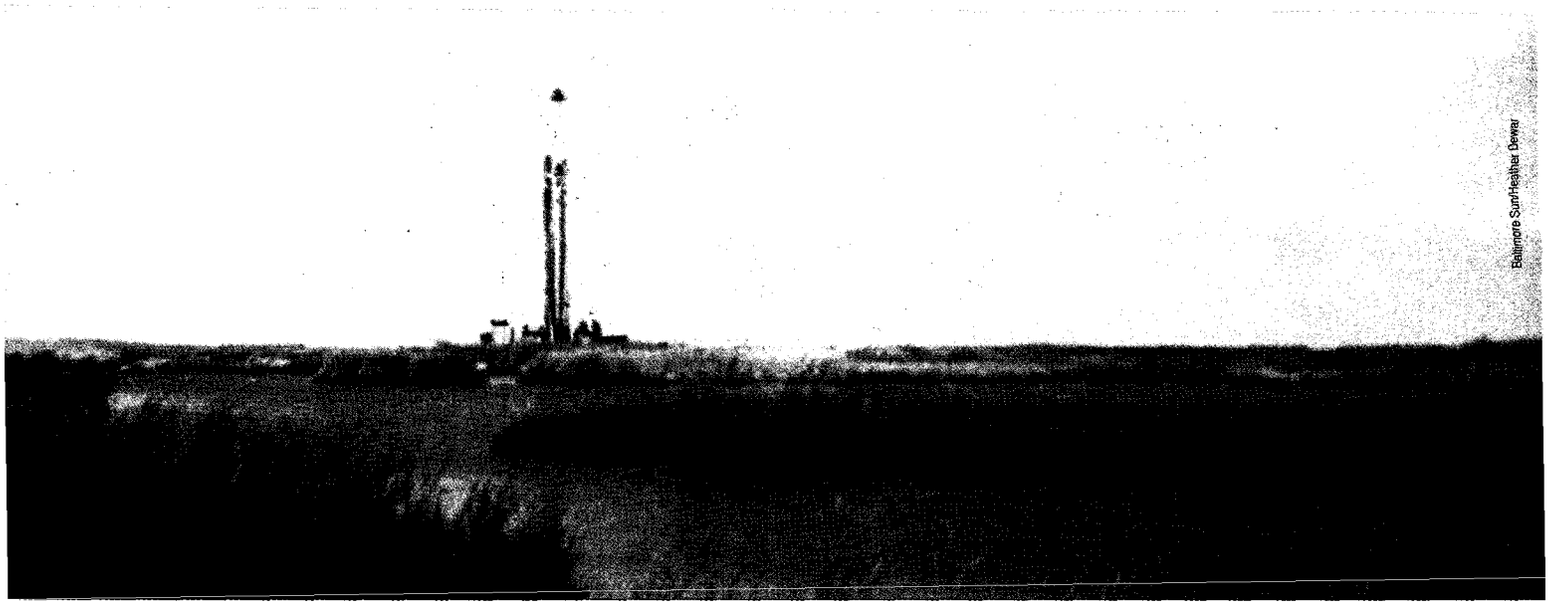

Dual Use Thousands of oil rigs have operated in scores of wildlife sanctuaries, without problems, for nearly 60 years. Here, a well is being drilled in the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana.

Ironically, the lake pipeline proposals were advanced specifically to avoid the predictable opposition to overland routes. No such luck. Despite the increasing demand for natural gas in Great Lakes-area states, it seems that anyone actually attempting to provide the needed energy in the future will be forced to run a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" gauntlet of just this sort.

With over 1 billion barrels of oil and many trillion cubic feet of natural gas sitting off California's coastline, you might think that development of the Golden State's offshore resources would be part of any plan to overcome the state's chronic and now infamous energy shortages. But you'd be wrong. In 1999, the governor's office, panicked by the Clinton administration's move to extend existing leases off the central coast to allow

Oil and Gas Supplies Could Be Unlimited

By Thomas Gold

The conventional view among geologists and geophysicists is that petroleum and black coal are fossil residues of ancient forests and swamps that were somehow buried deep below the earth's surface and then mysteriously transformed, by a process not understood, and never replicated or simulated in a laboratory, into hydrocarbons. This widely accepted view of the biological origins of petroleum is, in my view, utterly mistaken, and I've published a book proposing an alternative theory. I believe the Earth's massive reserves of hydrocarbons are not fossilized byproducts of biology at all, but rather part of the primordial "soup" from which our planet was created. I suggest crude oil and methane gas exist in abundance deep within our planet, and continue to upwell toward the surface.

My reasons for holding this view—first outlined by distinguished Russian scientists more than a century ago—are numerous. First, it has become quite evident that the sheer quantity of black coal and petroleum (especially its natural gas component, methane) is far greater than could be explained by any theory that depends on buried biological debris. Second, petroleum and methane have been found and continue to be found in locations on Earth to which surface biological remains have never had access. The presence of oil and gas at these sites simply cannot be explained by the biogenic theory. Third, one finds at these sites none of the other residues one would expect to find in the presence of biogenic hydrocarbons. Fourth and perhaps most tellingly, it is now generally agreed that there is a profuse supply of hydrocarbons on many other bodies in our solar system, where no origin from surface biology can be suggested.

The use of the term "fossil fuels" for Earth's supply of hydrocarbons is so widespread, the impression is given that their origin in surface biology has been scientifically proven. The truth is that an abundance of scientific evidence conflicts with the fossil fuel theory. It seems strange that there is little interest, and even much resistance, to exploring and testing this evidence, especially given the widely held belief that there is a fundamental shortage of these so-called fossil fuels.

For many decades, as we have found more and more petroleum and other hydrocarbons, we have consistently revised our estimates of world reserves upward. Even after intense usage over a century, record levels currently remain in the ground. The conclusion seems inescapable: We are simply not running out of natural gas, oil, and coal. These fuels are much more omnipresent than ever imagined. Even reserves that have already been tapped are actually being renewed (at slow or rapid rates, depending on the location) from below.

It is true that terrestrial hydrocarbons all contain biological molecules. But this does not prove that the hydrocarbon's *origin* is biological. The alternative explanation, set forth in my book, is that all the petroleum we obtain from the ground has suffered a large amount of biological contamination at levels deeper than our drills can reach. Specifically, I believe microbes living deep beneath the surface of our planet have left their mark, and even helped create, the oil, gas, and black coal that eventually comes to the surface.

Broad evidence I examine in my book suggests that a vast underground biology *has* to exist beneath the earth's surface. This is a new idea in science, inspired partly by recent discoveries of interesting and previously unknown life forms occupying deep-sea volcanic vents, underground caves, and other locations. Yet even in the past, chemists

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further exploration, filed suit demanding California regulators be allowed to supersede federal authority and make the final judgment on the leases. In late June, a U.S. District Court judge acceded.

The California Coastal Commission, an environmentalist-dominated body, will now be responsible for overseeing the energy development process, and the likelihood the Commission will approve the leases is low. The Commission itself has come under court scrutiny. It may be an unconstitutional organ since more than two-thirds of its members are appointed by the Democrat-led Legislature rather than elected. But that question is yet to be adjudicated, and meanwhile energy exploration and development is in limbo.

Onshore in California, exploration faces even higher hurdles. The Carrizo Plain is a section of the San Joaquin valley 50 miles long and eight miles wide, surrounded by some of the most productive oilfields in the country, and is judged by the USGS to have more promise as an oil-producing area than all but a handful of sites in the continental United States. But it was declared a national monument in the last days of the Clinton administration.

Unlike ANWR, the Carrizo Plain actually is home to many threatened or endangered species, and there is a long history of local opposition to its development. Energy producers insist they can tap the reserves without harming the environment but, as with offshore leases, political pressure from California's massive and influential Green lobby makes development a longshot. Energy crisis or no energy crisis, California appears determined to block resource development of any kind on lands where the political process can be used to stop it.

Both prodigious amounts of oil and prodigious amounts of seafood have been taken from the waters off Texas and Louisiana for half a century.

So, Californians and other Americans increasingly turn their hydrocarbon-hungry eyes to Louisiana and Texas. The outer continental shelf deposits off these two states are the only relatively uncontroversial reserves left to explore and produce in the entire U.S. Of the 1.5 billion acres of U.S. outer continental shelf, only 200 million are unlocked for oil and gas exploration—virtually all of it in the western Gulf of Mexico.

As onshore and near-shore deposits have been steadily depleted over the last 50 years, Gulf production has moved farther and farther into the ocean, to the point where 50 percent now takes place in water 1,000 feet deep or more. The U.S. Minerals Management Service has estimated that the Gulf of Mexico is home to over 37 billion barrels of oil. If the NIMBY-BANANA-NOPE forces continue to have their way, the

who studied the composition of petroleum have hinted at signs of subterranean life. "A primordial substance to which bio-products have been added," was the description of petroleum offered by Sir Robert Robinson, the 1947 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry.

Today, there is clear evidence for the existence of a massive deep biosphere. Space for all this living material is not a problem, provided it is microbial life, thriving in the pores of rocks. In the crust of the Earth, where porosity of a few percent is common, extending to a vertical depth of perhaps 10 kilometers, this separate domain of life could actually amount to far more than the volume occupied by all surface biological life.

What about nourishment? Hydrocarbons seeping upward will supply the carbon building blocks of life, and can also supply the energy for life (in lieu of sunlight) if oxygen is available for its combustion. Of course gaseous oxygen does not reach deep levels. And the oxygen found in subterranean rocks is too tightly bound to be useful for supporting life, as it would take more energy to liberate it than can be obtained from combusting hydrocarbons with it. There are, however, several common subterranean substances that can deliver oxygen sufficiently cheaply. The principal ones are oxidized sulfur in the form of sulfates, and highly oxidized iron—the oxygen molecules of which could be easily stripped off by microbes. The residues of such a microbial process would be sulfides and low-oxidation states of iron, such as magnetite. Tellingly, massive amounts of sulfides and magnetite are found precisely in petroleum-rich areas. Similarly, there are large number of cracks on the ocean floor that vent hydrocarbon gases, which provide nourishment to profuse microbial life surrounding the vents. These sites are surrounded by large deposits of metal sulfides, because in this case the oxygen donor appears to be the sulfate ion, a prominent component of seawater.

Other evidence for a constant supply of deep-source oil and gas comes from observations in the petroleum industry. Though this fact is not widely appreciated, we have seen oil and gas fields refill themselves, sometimes as fast as they were drained. Many fields have already produced several times as much as earlier estimates predicted. The conventional explanation of migration from adjoining oil pockets is quite inadequate. Petroleum scientists have also found that oil often contains trace elements quite different from what could be expected from the rock in a particular field. Nickel and vanadium have long been recognized in this category, but we must add to the list the inert gas helium, whose concentration has no other explanation than a deep origin, as well as a number of metals that are considered to come from much deeper levels, including iridium, gold, silver, and platinum.

One also has to consider the widespread and unexpected locales in which successful oil drilling is now taking place. In Russia, a major project has been under way to establish the extent to which bedrock, rather than sediments, contains hydrocarbons. More than 300 deep holes have been drilled in Tatarstan in central Russia, into broken-up basement rock, to depths of five kilometers or more. The majority showed the presence of high levels of hydrocarbons. About a hundred wells in other parts of the world exist that were also drilled in basement rock, and many are producing petroleum. Among those, the recent discovery of a major offshore site in Vietnam, the White Tiger field, is of particular interest, as very good oil production, largely from basement rock, is in progress there.

Thomas Gold, emeritus professor of physics at Cornell University, member of the National Academy of Sciences, and one of America's most distinguished scientists, is author of The Deep Hot Biosphere: The Myth of Fossil Fuels.

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Gulf is likely to be our only significant new domestic source of petroleum for years to come. While sizable, it will cover only a fraction of annual U.S. consumption. Those benighted Louisianans and Texans, along with their Alaskan cousins, might save America from a full-fledged collapse in energy production, but they can't carry the ball alone.

Compared to the environmental hysteria that now reigns in virtually every other part of the U.S., particularly in regard to offshore drilling, the enormous energy productivity and ecological success of America's western Gulf stands as a stark contrast—and a rebuke. The fact is, both prodigious amounts of oil and prodigious amounts of seafood have been taken from the waters off Texas and Louisiana for half a century. And contrary to the predictions of alarmists, local fisheries show no evidence of decline. Shrimp harvests this year, for instance, are projected by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to match or exceed the record bounty of 2000.

An overlapping fabric of regulations for the benefit of bugs, tourists, trees, beachfront owners, and others has become an oppressive wall against energy production.

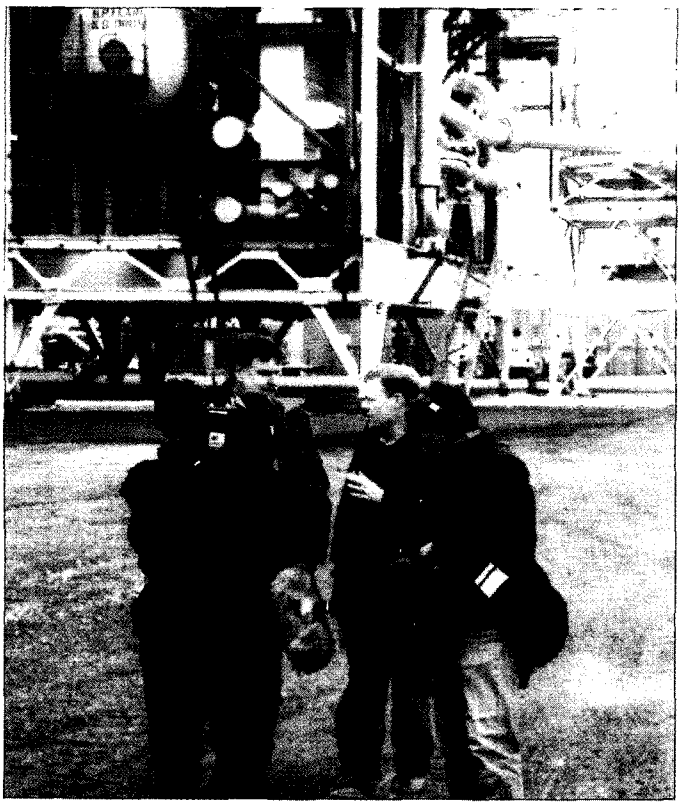
The politics of resource development in the United States have in recent years become an almost impenetrable thicket of raw emotion, environmental pseudo-science, new-age spirituality, and simple illogic. Individually, some of the regulations obstructing energy development (like historic antiquities laws or endangered species protections) seem reasonable enough. But their execution is often rigid and unwise, and *when taken as a whole*, this overlapping fabric of seemingly innocuous regulations for the benefit of beetles and forests and tourists and beachfront homeowners becomes an oppressive fortress wall. The bans forbid intelligent energy extraction from proceeding in parallel with any other uses of any given piece of land.

Using whatever legal club and emotional sympathies are handiest in each case—caribou herds here, Indian graves there—the goal, often pursued with near-religious fervor, is to restrict human development and usage of any kind in any "natural" landscape. It has become something akin to thought crime to suggest that untouched land is sometimes an over-costly luxury. There seems to be no recognition in the environmental community, or in most of the media, that this country's broad wealth, good health, and rich culture are built on industrial development.

In this doctrinaire refusal to make sensible compromises with the energy requirements of an advanced, electronic, high-mobility civilization, Green activists are guilty of either willful ignorance or egregious hypocrisy. Will the Californians who say they'll accept offshore rigs only over their dead bodies really accept having their children sent home uneducated from school, or lifeless from the hospital, because there was no power to keep society humming? Of course not. They expect Texans or Kuwaitis to provide them with their industrial and residential lifeblood, without any disturbance of the view from their surfside decks.

If environmentalist restrictions and NIMBY demands are indulged to the point where energy development becomes a practical impossibility—as it already is in many places—the standard of living that Americans enjoy and take for granted will suffer. Massive restrictions on industry are presented by Greens as a painless process that will magically yield a higher "quality of life," when in fact industrial obscurantism and energy Luddism inevitably conspire to shackle our citizenry.

The war against careful use of ANWR and other restricted areas in the United States is a vivid example of just that sort of false promise. Already, penalties are beginning to accumulate. If and when this country is revisited by a real energy supply crisis, it will quickly become apparent that today's environmental utopianism is an impoverishing and profoundly anti-democratic impulse.



Intense Media Scrutiny of Alaska Drilling Here an Australian television crew interviews an official of Alaska's Division of Oil and Gas, at BP's Endicott facility near Prudhoe Bay.

While we will surely continue to learn how to use energy more efficiently over time, there is no chance of reducing America's energy needs drastically in the near future. And meanwhile, there's no such thing as a free tank of gas. America's energy has to come from somewhere. Is there really a better option at this moment than opening the energy storehouse that awaits in the flat, graceless, lightly animaled, harshly climated, and utterly remote North Slope of Alaska? As a young Schlumberger engineer summed up on our return flight from Prudhoe to Anchorage, predicting that the 1002 area will be opened eventually: "There's nobody up there. I mean, *nobody* lives there. About where else can you say that?"

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A world of ideas on public policy.

Rethinking Health Insurance

By Milton Friedman

Since the end of World War II, the provision of medical care in the United States and other advanced countries has displayed three major features: first, rapid advance in the science of medicine; second, large increases in spending, both in terms of inflation-adjusted dollars per person and the fraction of national income spent on medical care; and third, rising dissatisfaction with the delivery of medical care, on the part of both consumers of medical care, and physicians and other suppliers of medical care.

A key difference between medical care and other technological revolutions is the role of government. In other technological revolutions, the initiative, financing, production, and distribution were primarily private, though government sometimes played a supporting or regulatory role. In medical care, government has come to play a leading role in financing, producing, and delivering medical service. Direct government spending on healthcare now exceeds 75 percent of total health spending for 15 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. For the U.S., the figure is 46 percent.

Two simple observations are key to explaining both the high level of spending on medical care and the dissatisfaction with that spending. The first is that most payments to physicians or hospitals or other caregivers for medical care are made not by the patient but by a third party – an insurance company or employer or governmental body. The second is that nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely or as frugally as he spends his own. These statements apply equally to other OECD countries.

Why are most medical payments made by third parties? The answer for the United States begins with the fact that medical care expenditures are exempt from federal income tax if, and only if, medical care is provided by

> ***A key difference between medical care and other technological revolutions is the role of government***

the employer. If an employee pays directly for medical care, the expenditure comes out of the employee's income after income tax. That strong incentive explains why most consumers get their medical care through their own employer, or their spouse's or parents' employer.

The tax exemption of employer-provided medical care in the U.S. has two different effects, both of which raise healthcare costs. First, it leads American workers to rely on their employer, rather than themselves, to make arrangements for medical care. Second, it leads employees to take a larger fraction of their total remuneration in the form of medical care than they would if spending on medical care had the same tax status as other expenditures.

Employer financing of medical care in the U.S. has caused the term "insurance" to acquire a rather different meaning in medicine than in most other contexts. We generally rely on insurance to protect us against events that are highly unlikely to occur but involve large losses if they do occur – major catastrophes, not minor regularly recurring expenses. We insure our houses against loss from fire, not against the cost of having to mow the lawn. We insure our cars against liability to others or major damage, not against having to pay for gasoline. Yet in medicine, it has become common to rely on insurance to pay for regular medical examinations and often for prescriptions.

Moreover, the states and the federal government have increasingly specified the coverage of insurance for medical care to a detail not common in other areas. The effect has been to raise the cost of insurance and to limit the options open to individuals. If the tax exemption for employer-provided medical care had never been enacted, the insurance market for medical care would probably have developed as other insurance markets have – as a way of providing for catastrophic, out-of-the-ordinary costs, not for routine expenditures.

Throughout the OECD countries, third-party payment has required the bureaucratization of medical care and, in the process, has changed the character of the relation between physicians or other caregivers and patients. A medical transaction is not simply between a caregiver and a patient; it has to be approved as "covered" by a private, or public-sector bureaucrat and the appropriate payment authorized. An inescapable result is that the interest of the patient is often in direct conflict with the interests of the caregiver's ultimate employer – whether the latter is a government or a corporation.

Milton Friedman, recipient of the 1976 Nobel Memorial Prize for economic science, has been a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution since 1977. This article was excerpted from the Winter 2001 issue of The Public Interest (www.thepublicinterest.com).

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Toyota Prius

The Car of the Future?

How markets rather than government intervention produced a better vehicle

By Eli Lehrer

The Toyota Prius has reclining bucket seats, a CD player, a digital instrument panel in its dash, and shiny stainless steel buttons for its climate control system. The trunk holds five grocery bags and the backseat has room for six-footers. To a casual observer it looks like a typical Japanese economy-size car with a slightly bigger than normal interior.

Looks deceive. A peek under the hood reveals a big difference: A battery about half the width of the car sits next to a small four cylinder engine. The car's hybrid gas-electric propulsion system combines electric motors that drive the car much of the time with a conventional gasoline engine that applies supplemental power and driving range, along with mechanisms that recycle leftover energy into fresh battery charges. Any time the driver steps on the brakes, power is transferred from the car's forward motion back to the battery.

When the Prius runs on battery power—which is most of the time during city driving—no pollution at all issues from its tailpipe. When a driver wants to go fast, additional power comes from the engine. Because the car can use its battery and recover more energy from braking in low-speed, stop-and-go city driving, the Prius' fuel economy reverses that of conventional cars: it gets 52 miles per gallon in the city and 45 on the highway. In theory at least, the Prius can travel about 600 miles on a single tank of gas. And you can buy one at just about any Toyota dealer.

The Prius isn't an anomaly. Also available today is Honda's Insight, a sleek, sporty hybrid gas-electric vehicle that gets up to 68 miles per gallon with a manual transmission. But the Insight is a niche product that seats only two and has virtually no cargo space. Next year, Honda will sell a gas-electric version of its popular Civic sedan. Meanwhile, a current diesel powered Volkswagen Jetta with a manual transmission sips even less fuel than the Prius while on the highway (although it pollutes as much as some SUVs). Nissan, on the other hand, markets a conventionally powered version of its Sentra coupe that is tuned to pollute as little as

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the Prius. And General Motors has recently updated some fuel-saving 1980s technology by letting eight cylinder cars shut down four of their cylinders while running at low speeds.

The Prius, in other words, doesn't involve any miracle technology that isn't also being marketed somewhere else. But it brings together a lot of interesting features in one package. What the car offers is a glimpse at the way steady, incremental, market-driven steps are bringing us vehicles that save energy and pollute less—without harsh or utopian government mandates.

The U.S. government tried to press automakers to build cars that could do what the Prius can. Despite well over a billion dollars of funding, it was a flop.

The Prius is an important case study because it involves a curious reversal of poli-economic stereotypes. Under the Clinton administration, the U.S. government tried to get its auto manufacturers to build cars that could do what the Prius can—through what was called the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. This was America's first major effort at peace-time government-driven "industrial policy" for a consumer product. And it was a major flop. Meanwhile, Toyota developed the Prius without any real input from the Japanese government. As a result of Toyota's nimbleness, and the clumsiness of the "government-business partnership" attempted in the U.S., the Prius enjoys a four-year head start on similar products from America's auto makers.

At the height of Japan's bubble economy in the 1980s, many Americans thought the United States should imitate Japan's national industrial policy. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, writers like James Fallows and politicians like Paul Tsongas claimed that Japan and social-democratic European states like France and Germany had faster growth rates and lower unemployment than the United States because they had industrial policies. Industrial policy might be thought of as a less intense version of Soviet-style central planning. In nations with industrial policies, companies remain privately owned and profit seeking, but government agencies work with corporate executives to choose new technologies and production goals. Anti-trust enforcement goes away, banks and unions cooperate with industry, and government subsidizes research and development efforts.

Contrary to the claims of its backers, the overall record of industrial policy is dismal. Japan's subsidized efforts to create high definition television, breakthrough computers, and Internet companies ended up spending billions of dollars to produce products nobody wanted to buy. Most of Japan's current malaise is a result of economic misallocations and overproduction created precisely through government industrial policies. Meanwhile, less regulated sectors in Japan like auto manufacturing have provided the bulk of the nation's trade earnings, and, perversely, the rising tax revenues that subsidize continued industrial policy.

In Western Europe, things went even worse. Largely as a result of their ham-handed central planning efforts, most EU countries experienced almost no net private-sector job creation during the 1980s. When their semi-planned economies faltered (as the United States boomed) European industrial policies lost their luster.

This record of failure, however, didn't stop efforts by American policy-makers to copy Euro-Japanese industrial policies. In response to Tsongas' successes in the Democratic primaries, Bill Clinton and Al Gore endorsed some industrial policies. Industrial policy also gained popularity among a few conservatives through Pat Buchanan's drumbeating for nationalistic government-led economic policies.

It was within the Clinton administration, however, that American industrial policy became a reality. The taste for planning and subsidies combined with a Clinton-Gore desire to serve their environmentalist constituency, and the result was the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. Meeting under the sponsorship of Vice President Gore in February 1993, the otherwise ruthlessly competitive U.S. car makers announced they would work together to develop an ordinary family sedan that averaged 80 miles to the gallon, paid heed to environmental concerns, and sold for about the same price as existing cars. Prototypes of this new "Supercar" would be finished by 2004, and the vehicles would be in consumers' driveways a few years later, the Vice President and his allies promised.

Despite well over a billion dollars in funding, the Supercar program has gone nowhere. From the beginning, the project's scientists and executives gravitated toward diesel-based technology because it offered the only practical way to achieve the 80 mile per gallon requirement at the heart of the government pipe dream. While diesel cars get better gas mileage than their non-diesel counterparts, they also produce far more smog-causing pollutants. As a result, the Supercar never gained support from its intended natural constituency in the environmental movement. A 2000 report from several leading environmental groups recommended its abolition.

"This is corporate welfare at its worst," gripes Erich Pica, an analyst with Friends of the Earth. Skepticism also runs rampant in Congress. "There's a feeling that the companies are always holding back their best technology for competitive reasons, and there's no forward progress as a result," says one House Science Committee staff member who has worked on the subject. Conservatives hate the very idea of the government meddling with the economy. "It's a stupid government trick," says Erik Gustafson of Citizens for a Sound Economy. "The government just set a goal with no basis in the market and no idea if the engineers can really achieve it."

In the early spring of this year, the Bush administration announced plans to replace the Supercar program with a much more modest effort to improve fuel economy in minivans and pickups. Since these products already produce the largest profits and sales volume for the Big Three American auto makers, it's hard to see why even those subsidies are needed. Soccer moms and dads in suburbs all over America would leap for an SUV that could make a fill-up a less wallet-emptying experience. The government seems embarrassed about the whole Supercar mess: While a high-

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ranking PNGV official eagerly defended the program to *TAE*, he said he couldn't speak on the record. An Energy Department spokesman, meanwhile, didn't return repeated telephone calls seeking more information.

The auto industry, however, likes the program, with its steady subsidies and politically correct patina. "By aiming high, we made some real breakthroughs. It's difficult to see how they would have happened without the project," says Bob Culver, a Ford executive who serves as director of the United States Council for Automotive Research, the Detroit-based consortium the major auto makers set up to accommodate the Supercar plan. Culver, however, concedes that USCAR abandoned the 80 miles per gallon goal even before the Bushies modified the program's objectives. While some show cars met the goal, production models would have had to sell for more than twice the price of comparable conventionally powered vehicles.

In the near future, just about every major manufacturer will produce hybrid gas-electric cars.

Culver insists that the Prius' existence doesn't really concern the American auto makers. "It's essentially a beta test project. Not a real, profitable car," he says. Culver points out that all of the Big Three have announced plans to market hybrid gas-electric vehicles by 2004, the year when they were supposed to manufacture production prototypes under Supercar. "So in an important way we're ahead of schedule," he concludes, sounding very much the good bureaucrat.

While the Big Three may feel they are ahead of some goofy government timetable, Toyota—which started Prius development at roughly the same time the Supercar project began—has been taking paid orders for about a year. Work on the Prius began in earnest in 1993 when Toyota executive Yoshiro Kimbara announced a company initiative to find vehicle ideas for the twenty-first century. An engineering team defined the project's fundamental goal: a vehicle slightly bigger than an ordinary economy-size car and half-again more fuel-efficient.

These objectives had a practical, profit-driven basis: In Toyota's Japanese home market, gas sells for up to five dollars per gallon, so fuel economy improvements are much more attractive to consumers than in the United States. Toyota also used the Prius development process to catch up with some American design advances: The car incorporates so-called cab-forward principles pioneered by Chrysler, which allow cars to have bigger interiors for a given wheel base and exterior size. Toyota reports that the company received no subsidy in developing the Prius. Japanese tax laws, though, do allow companies to write off more research and development expenditures than American laws, and even give tax credits for certain R&D activities.

Toyota realizes that the Prius is an incremental step on the way to building an even more attractive car. "The Prius is no diversion," says Toyota executive Shinichi Kato. "The Prius is merely the first example of new thinking to reach the market." This stands in stark contrast to the calamitously impractical all-electric cars marketed recently by GM. These were an attempt to satisfy government mandates that "zero emission" vehicles be sold in significant numbers in California and elsewhere by the year 2003. But the 100 percent battery-driven vehicles turned out to be so hopeless they had to be abandoned.

What of Culver's claim that the Prius isn't a real car but a technology beta test? Toyota spokeswoman Martha Voss concedes that Toyota loses some money—although not a lot—on each Prius that it sells. Consumers buy the car for $19,995, while similarly equipped Japanese cars such as the Toyota Corolla and Honda Civic cost about $3,500 less, and American models like the Dodge Neon and Chevrolet Cavalier are around $4,500 less. (A limited supply means nobody pays less than full retail price for a Prius.) On the other hand, selling innovative new products at a loss often makes good business sense in the auto industry: The experience of producing the cool-but-impractical Viper and Prowler models gave DaimlerChrysler the experience to come up with today's hot-selling, profitable PT Cruiser.

Unlike the exotic sports cars and wild-looking roadsters that many companies market to build their identities and attract loyal customers, the Prius appeals to very normal buyers. Washington, D.C. computer consultant Geoffrey Forman is a pretty typical example. He bought the car out of a mix of environmental concerns and admiration of its technology, and uses it as his family's only car. "It's a good, normal family car," he says. "I use it for grocery shopping, car pool, you name it."

The Prius needs refinement before it will attract lots of customers without environmentalist concerns or a desire to own the newest technology. Because they recover energy from the car's momentum, the brakes grip hard and made my stomach jump when I came to a stop sign. Thanks to the quick stops and lack of road feel, the Prius isn't particularly *fun* to drive. But then again, neither are most other family cars. The vaunted fuel savings don't always pan out either. Batteries react poorly to cold, and a March 2000 *Car and Driver* test pointed out that a week of driving in below freezing temperatures resulted in ho-hum gas mileage of 35 miles per gallon.

But the Prius also has a lot to like. For the most part, the Prius drives like any other car. It climbs hills and merges into high-speed traffic just fine. The floaty steering that was annoying in the city and along winding roads is a pleasure on the freeway. The car's lack of engine noise means that the rest of life is a lot more audible—in the Washington suburbs I heard birds chirping by the side of the road. And the car holds enough gas to make a round trip from Washington, D.C. to New York City without refueling.

It's likely that in the near future just about every major carmaker will produce hybrid gas-electric cars. For now, we have the Prius. It's not for everyone, and it's not yet profitable. But it is a real, practical automobile, which is more than Al Gore can say about his Supercar.

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The Kyoto Treaty Deserved to Die

Why we should think more and clamp down less on global warming.

By Christopher DeMuth

President Bush's firm rejection of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change put the final nail in the coffin of a doomed project. By 2012, the agreement would have required the leading industrial nations to reduce their "greenhouse gas" emissions to levels below *1990* totals (regardless of population growth and economic transformations in the various countries), and would have exempted China and other developing nations entirely (despite the fact that their growing emissions would have swamped the reductions from the developed nations). Long before President Bush acted, this approach had been rejected by the U.S. Senate in a vote of 95-0, which is why President Clinton never submitted the treaty for ratification. Nor had any other major nation adopted the agreement when implementation negotiations collapsed amidst acrimony and name-calling in November 2000.

The failure of the Kyoto Protocol was both inevitable and desirable—inevitable because it required the impossible, desirable because it stood in the way of feasible, effective climate-change policies. Those who framed the agreement treated global warming as a well-understood, immediate problem—indeed as an incipient crisis. This view produced a program of drastic short-term controls on emissions of CO2 and other gases, which in turn produced irresoluble economic conflicts, both among the developed nations that negotiated the agreement and between the developed and developing nations.

The key features of the climate change debate are large degrees of uncertainty and a long time horizon. Although it is fairly well-established that the Earth's atmosphere has warmed somewhat (one degree Fahrenheit) during the past century, it's not clear why this happened. The warming may have been due to human impositions (the burning of fossil fuels and other incidents of industrial growth), or to natural solar or climate variations, or to some of each. Whatever the causes, we don't know if future warming trends will be large or small, or whether the net environmental and economic consequences (including both beneficial and harmful effects) may be large or small.

These uncertainties are carefully described in the recent official reports on global warming—the National Academy of Sciences' June 2001 report to President Bush, and the earlier Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is regrettable that the media accounts of these studies have downplayed or ignored the uncertainties, for they are fundamental to the question of right policy, not academic quibbles or excuses for delay. Equally fundamental is the long time horizon: Even if we are in for substantial warming, the effects will not begin to occur for several decades, probably at least a half century.

It is important to appreciate that we have time, because we *need* time, and not only to get a better grip on causes and consequences. Regulating CO2 emissions on a global scale would require political institutions that do not now exist—and, in the developing nations, political support that will not exist until their citizens have attained significantly higher standards of living. Moreover, the progressive replacement over time of fossil-fuel-burning by newer methods of producing energy may solve the problem without recourse to controls. If policy encouragement is

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needed, existing and prospective pollution controls may be sufficient. Finally, human and ecological adaption, and even direct climate "bioengineering," could be equally or more effective responses to harmful warming whatever the cause—and would be the *only* effective responses to natural warming.

We will know vastly more about the relative merits of these alternatives several decades from now. And we will almost certainly be vastly richer—a key consideration, especially in China and other currently poor nations, if the best responses involve taxes, regulatory controls, or public expenditures that impinge seriously on economic growth. As economist Thomas Schelling has noted, the speed at which we move toward acceptable atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases makes little difference as a climatic matter, but a tremendous difference as an economic matter.

The collapse of the Kyoto negotiations in the fall of 2000, and the Bush administration's renunciation of the agreement in the spring of 2001, have produced a great deal of recrimination, finger-pointing, and political posturing. But problems that are new, complex, and unfamiliar often prompt a succession of false starts before an effective approach is hit upon. That the first stab at global-climate policy was a failure should be no more surprising or dispiriting than the failure of initial attempts to alleviate the Great Depression, or to counter the spread of communism.

The Kyoto failure suggests a new, three-part approach to the problem. The first two parts are a variant on the New Age slogan, "Think Globally, Act Locally." Vastly more serious, de-politicized scientific research needs to be devoted to the global aspects of climate change; but immediate government actions should be local, regional, and incremental rather than international. The third part of any immediate program should be a moratorium on regulatory controls for the time being. Premature emissions controls or energy taxes will only transform the climate-change issue from one concerned with cause, consequence, and best-response to one concerned with political and economic advantage.

Think Globally—Global climate variation is an immensely complicated matter, and needs to be thought through much more systematically. The major effect of new knowledge accumulated over the last decade has actually been *increased uncertainty* concerning likely future warming and its consequences (compared to what many observers *thought* they knew). Now that the hasty turn to draconian regulatory controls, as envisioned in Kyoto, has reached a dead-end, the climate-change agenda should shift instead to scientific research, technology development, and institution building.

The U.S. government currently spends about $1.7 billion annually on climate-change research. More than $1 billion of it is NASA expenditures, mainly on satellite weather monitoring. Only a few hundred million is for all other aspects of climate science, for developing alternative responses to warming, and for investigating non-fossil-fuel energy technologies. This is a truly piddling sum relative to the size of the issue, and reflects the Clinton administration's adamant uninterest in climate-change science. "Science has spoken," pronounced former Vice President Gore: For him, science was a source of authority, and a weapon with which to browbeat and silence political critics, rather than a discovery process driven by skepticism and falsification. At the early stages of a research project, "solid science" is not solid at all but consists of open competition among multiple hypotheses. Reversing the closed-minded legacy of the Clinton years is now a matter of some urgency.

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, when he was CEO of Alcoa, recommended a large increase in expenditures on all facets of climate-change science, and the commissioning of an independent board of respected academic, professional, and business leaders to oversee the research and issue periodic reports synthesizing the state of knowledge. President Bush's recent statement on climate change, with its mention of a Climate Change Research Initiative and a Climate Change Technology Initiative, appears to contemplate a substantial expansion and reordering of federal efforts, although the specifics are still being developed.

The current research effort could be improved in many ways other than just spending more. Many top scientists believe that the U.S. research program (like the international IPCC program—which has tended to ignore many distinguished physicists and meteorologists whose work casts doubt on the influence of greenhouse gases on global temperature trends) is skewed toward scientists who take an alarmist view of the problem. A competition of ideas, including iconoclastic views, needs to be encouraged rather than suppressed. The research effort should encompass not only climate-change causation and forecasting and non-fossil-fuel energy technologies, but also adaptive and "geoengineering" strategies for responding to potential harmful warming from whatever source (including natural variation). The United States should continue to take an active role in the IPCC but take steps to de-politicize its functioning.

Act Locally—The Kyoto Protocol's controls over CO2 and other emissions would have begun in 2008 and included a complex scheme of trading in emissions "credits" across national boundaries. It was fantasy to think that such a scheme, involving scores of countries, could have been put in place in less time than it takes a single city to get organized for an Olympic Games. Even the advanced nations lack sufficient information on emissions and "sinks" (such as forests, which *absorb* large quantities of CO2 from the atmosphere) to permit trading in credits for reducing emissions. And many poorer nations are just too deficient in their legal and political institutions to take part at all in such complex efforts.

In the early 1990s, several delegations of officials from the Russian and Chinese governments visited the United States to study how to establish securities exchanges in their countries. They learned, to their dismay, that the first step was not to design a trading floor or computer software or communications networks, but rather to establish honest and accurate systems of financial accounting and disclosure, so that securities could be priced and traded with confidence. In global emissions trading, the accounting systems have only begun to be established.

If controls on CO2 and other greenhouse gases turn out to be necessary, much work needs to be done to build the institutions appropriate to the task. Kyoto teaches that it is impractical to try to build them everywhere all at once; a major cause of its collapse was the differing interests of the economically developed and undeveloped nations, and the complexity of establishing institutions for carbon trading that will work with differing political systems. A more modest, incremental approach to institution building is called for, involving smaller groups of nations joined by geographic proximity or economic interest.

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One excellent start would be for the United States, Canada, and Mexico to work together to build reliable national inventories of greenhouse gas emissions and sinks, and to develop model institutions for cross-border trading of emissions credits. Such a project would be much more likely to produce useful information and tangible institutional progress than anything attempted under Kyoto. The United States and its two neighbors feature significant variations in natural resources, industrialization, GDP, culture, and political institutions, yet they already work productively together on a variety of problems. Their three heads of state—the "three amigos"—are looking for new joint projects. Asian and European nations, which have been so critical of the U.S. withdrawal from Kyoto, should be invited to launch similar regional projects.

There are numerous other opportunities for immediate cooperative projects. Japanese industry has been successful in developing alternative energy technologies like hybrid gas-electric automobiles, as well as promising methods for recycling CO2 emissions back into industrial processes. The new Koizumi government is searching eagerly for projects to demonstrate its dedication to the global environmental improvement. A joint U.S.-Japan project on alternative energy technologies and CO2 recycling would no doubt suffer from the shortcomings of all such government projects, but it would involve work where the two nations have unique assets (advanced science and technology) and common interests going beyond the global warming issue (such as achieving greater energy independence).

Localized projects such as these would be the undertakings of economically advanced nations, which is appropriate. The poorer nations face many more urgent problems than the prospect of warmer weather 50 years or a century from now. It is the rich, high-tech, environmentally concerned nations that should be working on the climate-change problem. Eventually they may be able to help later-developing nations bypass the fossil-fuel era in energy production, just as many of them are now bypassing the copper-wire era in telecommunications.

No Quick Regulatory Controls—The impossibility of establishing a global emissions control program in a short period of time was only a secondary cause of Kyoto's collapse; the primary cause was the enormous *cost* of the controls and the unequal and arbitrary distribution of costs within and between nations. Part of the problem was the Protocol's odd requirement that each nation's reductions were to be measured against its emissions at a much earlier date—1990. This would have produced bizarre anomalies. The Russian government, for instance, would have been eligible for hundreds of billions of dollars worth of "credits" for reducing its emissions, simply because Russian industry collapsed in the 1990s. And the "baseline" issue was only one of numerous features of Kyoto's CO2 control-and-trading program that caused the negotiations to degenerate into a scramble for economic advantage. The almost comical denouement came when the European nations insisted on *weakening* the control program to make it work more to the economic disadvantage of the United States.

The moment climate-change policy turns to emissions controls, it ceases to be about science and starts to be about economic jockeying.

The moment climate-change policy turns to the issue of emissions controls, it ceases to be about science and starts to be about economic interests. That is the most important lesson of the Kyoto collapse. But in this case it was only an accident that the forces of economic interest ended up scuttling a bad agreement rather than securing it (as has happened more than once in domestic environmental policy).

The day may come when the science of global warming has gelled to the extent that hard and contentious choices about a costly control regime must be faced. But that day is decades away at worst, and it may not come at all. If it does come, the interest-group pressures will be less serious than today—because our knowledge of the nature of the problem and appropriate remedies will be much more confident. For the time being, the urgent tasks of a serious climate-change policy are scientific, technological, and institutional—and these can only be distorted and undermined by a precipitate move toward controls.

FORWARD OBSERVER *continued from page 15*

sional hearing was that it sent the wrong message to investors. It implied that, if only we could get the regulations right, all judgments by analysts would be perfectly sound. In fact, picking stocks is a risky business, and investors should always be skeptical (not just because of bias). The only way to protect yourself is to diversify. The hearing's subtext, however, was that if only analysts were unbiased, they would have told investors to bail out of bad tech stocks before the NASDAQ tanked in the spring of 2000.

But the best way to make money in the stock market is to find good stocks and hold them for the long run. Relying on analysts to tell you when to jump in and out of the market is foolish. Analysts can point the way to good companies (and they appear to do a good job of that), but individual investors must accept personal responsibility for their choices. Investors who lack the time or the expertise to pick stocks can buy diversified mutual funds, or funds that mimic a broad index like the S&P 500.

On that subject: It was juicily ironic that the most severe critic of the analysts at the June 14 hearing was a money manager from Dallas named David Tice, who runs his own fund called Prudent Bear. Tice has long held a negative view of the stock market, and he has long been wrong. For the five years ending May 31, I noted at the hearing, Tice's fund had produced a cumulative return of minus 43 percent. At the same time, the S&P more than doubled.

Did Mr. Tice lack objectivity? Should he, rather than Ms. Meeker, have been the object of the politicians' scorn? Of course not. He was just plain wrong. Investors—and politicians—need to understand that sometimes people make mistakes. In a free market, with widespread dissemination of information, the public is able to sort through the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, and make its own choices.

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Green Devil

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Why are environmentalists so terrified of Gale Norton...and George Bush?

By Bart Hinkle

She has been called mean-spirited. She has been called an "extremist," "a natural disaster," and "James Watt in a skirt." Who is Gale Norton, and what has she done to draw such vituperation? Norton does not appear to have horns and cloven hooves. She is smart and personable. Nevertheless, droves of people start drooling at the prospect of seeing her head on a stick. For Gale Norton has an agenda, and as the Secretary of the Interior she now has the power to put it in place.

Created in 1849, the Interior Department oversees more than 600 million acres of federal land—more than one quarter of all the territory in the United States, including 45 percent of California, half of Wyoming, 62 percent of Idaho, and 80 percent of Nevada. It controls the extraction of natural resources from those lands and regulates how (and whether) private individuals may make use of them. Through its various bureaus, the Department enforces the Endangered Species Act, wetlands laws, even restrictions on filming on public land. The Bureau of Reclamation is the second-largest wholesaler of water in the nation.

The Clinton administration used Interior to impose sweeping new edicts. It designated 150 miles of the Missouri River in Montana a national monument. It declared the 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase Escalante in Utah a national monument—the largest one outside Alaska, bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. The administration opposed drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). It banned recreational snow-mobiling in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, and put sharp limits on the numbers of automobiles in the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Zion parks. It ordered an 18-month freeze on road construction in 130 national forests covering 33 million acres.

In its final days, the administration went into overdrive. Mr. Clinton imposed new rules on hard-rock mining on public lands. Fifty-eight million acres of forest land were placed under a Roadless Area Conservation Rule, putting a stop to logging, road building, and mineral leasing. The administration closed off 84 million acres around Hawaii to oil drilling, and established more than a half-dozen national monuments.

If all that seems a trifle overzealous, keep in mind that former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt saw his cause as a theological one. In 1996, he told the League of Conservation Voters that Republicans seeking to moderate the Endangered Species Act were committing not just a mistake but a sin: "For if they heard that command of our Creator, if they truly listened to His instructions to be responsible stewards, then their entire framework of human rationalizations for tearing apart the Act would come to naught."

Norton takes a different approach. To environmentalists, she is not merely a heretic, but an apostate. She has traced the arc described by Winston Churchill, who said that anyone who is not a liberal when young has no heart, and anyone who is not conservative when old has no brain.

Norton was born in 1954 in Wichita, Kansas. When she was five, her family moved to Thornton, Colorado where her father, Dale, took a job with Learjet. She attended Thornton High, graduating near the top of her class. At the University of Denver she worked on the school paper—and protested the Vietnam War. In 1975, after only three years, Norton graduated *magna cum laude* and earned a place in Phi Beta Kappa.

With a perfect score on the LSAT, she entered the University of

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Denver's law school, where she edited a transportation law journal, and wrote in favor of tighter emissions standards. Then she discovered Ayn Rand and began moving toward the libertarianism of her father. After receiving her degree, she joined the Mountain States Legal Foundation, founded by James Watt.

Watt defined environmentalists as "those who would deny economic development" on public lands, and fought to have control of federal lands turned over to the states. He has been called Norton's mentor. At Mountain States, Norton handled cases challenging Interior Department permits and EPA clean-air regulations. She helped challenge the constitutionality of the Surface Mining Act. Mountain States' amicus brief claimed the Act failed "to comply with the [Constitution's] standards of federalism" and that through it, "Congress has usurped state government functions."

The Bush/Norton approach attempts to reconcile private property and free-market economics with environmental protection.

After stints at the Hoover Institution, the Agriculture Department, the Political Economy Research Center, and the Interior Department (post-Watt), among others, Norton made her way into politics by challenging Colorado Attorney General Duane Woodard. With considerable help from a Republican apparatus incensed that Woodard had switched from the GOP to the Democratic Party, she won.

In office, she steered a largely, but not exclusively, conservative course. She cautioned judges not to rule "from an ivory-tower perspective." She warned states "against the federal government gaining too much power over our lives." She defended Colorado's Amendment 2, which prohibited special rights for gays and lesbians, and told Colorado's colleges and universities they could no longer award race-based scholarships. "If government can discriminate in favor of a particular race just because it sounds politically correct," she said, "it can discriminate against that race when the political winds shift." (In the face of blistering criticism Norton reversed herself shortly thereafter.)

She challenged federally supervised busing in Denver, brought suit against auto-body-shop owners for price-fixing, and defended from an EPA challenge the state's "self-audit" law, under which polluters could escape sanctions if they reported violations themselves. She was criticized in 1992 when a gold mine owned by Summitville Consolidated Mining leaked cyanide and acids into the Alamosa River. Company officials fled the country, and the federal government spent $150 million on cleanup efforts.

But Norton also sided with environmentalists on some issues, such as her court victory forcing the federal government to clean up hazardous wastes at the Rocky Flats nuclear plant and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Superfund site. When the state lost a ruling at the district-court level, Norton successfully argued the case herself on appeal. She also created Colorado's first environmental-crimes task force, which brought together federal, state, and local officials.

But the interior secretary who started out as a liberal became a libertarian in public life—she was a delegate to the Libertarian Party's 1980 convention. As an elected official she espoused many generally conservative views: tough on crime, pro-death penalty, pro-business, in favor of a balanced-budget amendment, against raising the minimum wage. But her views are not monolithic. She supports abortion rights, and as Colorado Attorney General she de-emphasized civil asset forfeiture—under which the property of an individual accused of drug trafficking can be seized by law enforcement and sold, even if the individual is never convicted.

Norton's interest in private property and privacy extends to her personal life. She is considered shy, and her recreational habits reflect that trait. A 1996 *Denver Rocky Mountain News* story reported that she enjoys "Myst," a computer game played solo in which the player wanders through deserted places solving puzzles. She and her husband enjoy hiking and backpacking, and her other interests include skiing and golf.

Friends and opponents alike describe her as serious, focused, and methodical. Larry MacDonnell, former director of the Natural Resources Law Center at the University of Colorado, has called her "surprisingly nonideological in her work." Don Barry, with the Wilderness Society, believes she has "chosen competence and knowledge over political ideology." Just about everyone says she is pleasant and friendly. Fred Smith of the Competitive Enterprise Institute praises her "ability to use a rhetoric that disarms the left."

Before her confirmation, Norton made waves with certain public statements about the environment. Critics hammered her for speaking of a property-owner's possible "right to pollute," for supporting President Bush's call to open ANWR to oil drilling, for disputing the constitutionality of the Endangered Species Act, and for saying there was no scientific consensus on global warming. In short: for not being Bruce Babbitt in a skirt.

During her confirmation hearings, she backtracked on some positions and made nice, mollifying Democrats with statements like "Americans are proud of the many exquisite natural treasures we have within our shores. President-elect Bush believes, as I do, that the top priority of the Department of the Interior must be to conserve those natural treasures." She acknowledged the constitutionality of the Endangered Species Act, and said her remarks about a right to pollute were exaggerations. She also toned down her position on global warming.

Upon taking office, the Bush administration immediately suspended all federal rules issued in the closing days of the Clinton era, pending review. In February, the Fish and Wildlife Service withdrew a "supplemental biological opinion" aimed at sheltering salmon and trout in the Columbia and Snake River basins. Environmentalists mostly let that slide, but they went ballistic when the administration abandoned the Kyoto treaty on global warming, which barely stood a chance of being approved by the Senate. And for good reason: The measures the protocol called for would have severely cramped the U.S. economy. The treaty failed to hold all countries to the same standards, and it has not been ratified by any other nation except Romania.

Then the Environmental Protection Agency withdrew a

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pending standard—once again a last-minute Clinton diktat—sharply lowering the permissible level of arsenic in drinking water. Bush stood on firm scientific ground: The AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies examined the tighter standard and found it would save, in all probability, fewer than a dozen lives a year, at an annual cost of $65 million. But Democrats, environmentalists, and the media had a field day. "Many will die from arsenic-related cancers and other diseases, yet George Bush apparently doesn't care," said the Natural Resources Defense Council's Erik Olson. The Democratic Party aired an ad showing a little girl holding a glass of water and asking her mommy for more arsenic. Within a month, the administration said it would implement tighter new rules after all, though not as tight as Clinton's.

The Bush environmental approach has been, on the whole, quite middle of the road. In a May speech in Sequoia National Park in California, the President said his administration "will adopt a new spirit of respect and cooperation because, in the end, that is the better way to protect the environment we all share." He spoke of the need "to use the land well and sometimes not to use it at all," and thereby "protect the claims of nature while also protecting the legal rights of property owners." The administration has increased financing for federal parks, asked a federal appeals court to uphold a Clinton-era plan to regulate mercury pollution, endorsed a court settlement banning personal watercraft in national parks, approved efficiency standards for washing machines, water heaters, and air conditioners, let stand a wetlands rule plus regulations governing the reporting of lead emissions, and said it would press older power plants to reduce emissions to lessen haze in national parks. Hardly the actions of people bent on raping the planet.

Nevertheless, environmental groups portray the administration as riding in the hip pocket of big business. Few of them believe anyone can seriously support both free markets and the environment. Yet the Bush approach represents the vanguard of a conservative revolution that attempts to reconcile private property and free-market economics with environmental protection. Senior White House adviser Karl Rove says the President wishes to preserve a clean environment in a "practical" manner, and during her confirmation hearings, Norton spoke of public-private partnerships and striking balances. Smith of the Competitive Enterprise Institute believes the general Norton strategy will be one of privatization and devolution—turning power back to the states or localities—although, he says, she will "walk gingerly" on privatizing federal holdings. Norton has argued for "environmental federalism," giving control of regulation to states and localities, which are in a better position to know the conditions on the ground (or in the air or water).

Free-market analysts contend that heavy-handed, top-down regulation can actually prove counterproductive. Consider vehicle fuel economy standards. A vehicle that gets better gas mileage pollutes less. But better mileage also reduces the cost per mile driven, so individuals with economy cars tend to travel more. This is referred to as the rebound effect. Similarly, because the discovery of an endangered species can shut down all use of a piece of land, owners have a strong incentive to make their property as inhospitable as possible to any creature that might want to stop by or stay.

How to address the problem? One possibility might be "species ranching." Interested parties could be compensated for protecting rare plants or animals, and perhaps even be directly encouraged to farm threatened species. "Incentives matter," says Terry Anderson of the Political Economy Research Center (PERC). One example of just how much they matter can be seen in emissions trading credits. These create healthy incentives by allowing the owners of a plant not emitting the maximum allowable level of a given pollutant to sell the difference to other plants. This establishes a financial inducement for finding the ways to reduce emissions. A credit-trading system for acid rain, created in 1990, was expected to see a credit cost of about $1,000 per ton of byproducts. In reality, the credits trade for one-tenth of that. As a result, acid-rain emissions fell faster during the past decade than the Clean Air Act supporters anticipated, despite rising consumption of coal. (Environmentalists who wish to lower the level of pollution even more could buy credits when they become available and simply not use them.)

PERC, which has done much of the spadework on free-market environmentalism, suggests numerous ways to bring the power of market forces to environmental protection. It points out that when hunters are able to pay a fee to hunt on a particular piece of land, the landowner will improve the habitat—his property—to attract more game. One PERC report notes that International Paper established a wildlife and recreation program on timber property in the South. The fees it brought in soon amounted to one-quarter of the company's profits from the region. The habitat was improved, and wildlife flourished—without a single government edict.

As a federalist who believes in decentralizing government power wherever possible, Norton often refers to "the four C's—consultation, cooperation, communication, all in the service of conservation." As she told the National Newspaper Association in March, "A prime example of government not listening to people happened a few months ago, when—in their final hours—the previous administration suddenly designated over 1 million acres of national monuments. In 2000, the total amount of monument land designated equaled the size of the state of Connecticut. But the previous administration took little trouble to assure that the monuments can be maintained. They didn't include a single dollar to hire a ranger to protect the monuments and guide people. They didn't include a single dollar to build a visitor center. They didn't even include money to put up one sign so visitors can actually find the new monuments. And worse yet, they didn't work with local property owners, elected officials, and other people whose lives were affected."

Rather than forcing a command-and-control approach to regulation, Gale Norton's Interior Department may rely more on "compliance assistance," through which regulators work hand-in-hand with the regulated to achieve environmental goals. Virginia adopted this approach during the tenure of then-Governor George Allen. The number of lawsuits filed and the amount of fines collected fell, and environmental advocates howled. Environmental conditions, however, improved.

And isn't that, Gale Norton wonders (along with her boss George Bush), the whole point?

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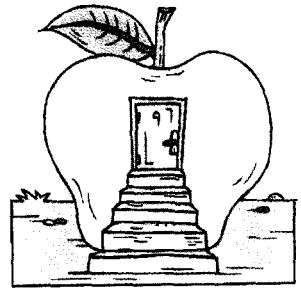
In Real Life

First-person America



Back to School—In the Dining Room

By Isabel Lyman

PELHAM, MASSACHUSETTS—On a wintry morning, two masculine heads are hovering over a textbook on my scuffed dining room table. The heads begin talking about radicals. No, not the Che Guevara or Abbie Hoffman kind. Rather, the radicals familiar to students of algebra. Willard III, who is fifteen and goes by the family nickname "Bebé," is being taught by his father and namesake Willard II (who goes by the nickname Wid). Dad's tools for teaching his son math are old-fashioned but effective—pencil, paper, and oodles of sample problems. He requires mastery before advancement.

For the past year, my husband has worked part-time as a house painter and laborer while training for triathlons, but he devotes the bulk of his day to homeschooling Bebé. In addition to algebra, Wid conducts classes in physical science, the Bible, and Dirt Biking 101. On occasion, he will invite Mr. Bach, Mr. Chopin, and Mr. Rachmaninov to provide background concertos for his classes. He also escorts our younger child around western Massachusetts and southern Vermont to ice hockey games and snowboarding excursions.

I pitch in by dispensing fiction and non-fiction reading assignments, as well as checking compositions and driving Bebé to his job at a service station. The three of us often watch news shows like "The O'Reilly Factor" and discuss current events. One day a week, Bebé attends an American history seminar at the Victorian home of Whitney Robinson, age 14, a fellow homeschooler who lives nearby. Whitney is taught by her lawyer dad, who delivers the succinct weekly lectures.

Our family has been homeschooling for over a decade, and no year has resembled the previous one. Dan, our elder son, was taught at home for many semesters while we lived on a small farm with chickens and cows. During a subsequent year, we went on sabbatical to Oklahoma and received a crash course in tornados and Sooners. When Dan turned sixteen, he yearned to try public school and play football. We grudgingly agreed to this experiment in school choice, and his experience—he just graduated from Amherst Regional High School—has only confirmed our opinion of government schools as tax-funded temples to socialism and adolescent foolishness.

My husband has worked as a high school teacher, a college math instructor, and a long-haul trucker. I think of him as a contemporary renaissance man, one of the few Americans who holds both a Ph.D. in civil engineering and a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) for driving 18-wheelers. Last summer, when I accepted a job at the editorial department of a big city newspaper, Wid seized the moment to enthusiastically reinvent himself as Mr. Schoolmarm. Not only did Wid teach Bebé, he also volunteered at a homeschool cooperative (the only male amidst a sea of moms), teaching other teens Español and math. He also sorted laundry, threw football passes to Dan, mowed the lawn, and frequently brought me bagels and iced coffee for lunch.

After my newspaper stint, I turned my attention to writing a book. When the votes came in, there was an overwhelming consensus that Wid should continue being all dad, all the time. So the Lymans supplemented their living expenses by drawing down earlier investments in real estate and the stock market.

Our lifestyle sometimes raises eyebrows and provokes pointed questions.

All dad,

all the time.

Even in an age where clergy, cops, and social thinkers often lament the dearth of good fathers, alpha males turned homeschooling dads are a strange species. So, when Dr. Lyman explains to folks why he doesn't have "a real job" he simply says, "My family is my job…at least for now." He is investing his time, energy, and talents in his younger son's academic education and his older son's character training. He wears the hats of teacher, principal, custodian, bus driver, coach, guidance counselor, and editor.

Wid remains unfazed by the questions, and I am honored to have our family on the receiving end of all this stability. There certainly are tangible results to his efforts. Dan had impressive SAT scores and got accepted into the college of his choice; two of Bebé's tough hockey teammates have asked their parents to homeschool them; our boys often spot grammar gaffes and debunk politically correct platitudes. And they have learned to value blue-collar, white-collar, and open-collar workers.

In the near future, Dan ponders a job in advertising and marketing. Bebé, who has money tucked away in trucking stocks, wants to create lots of wealth before he gets married. He says he wants to be available to homeschool his children. Hmm. I wonder where he got such a radical idea?

Isabel Lyman is the author of The Homeschooling Revolution.

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Flashback

To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain ever a child—Cicero

The Road to Columbine

As the school bells ring in another fall, let us recall those benighted days before the 2,000-student high school, with its Olympic-sized swimming pool, gleaming array of computers, and anonymous enrollees falling through gilded cracks.

Variety, local accents, and grassroots involvement marked the old American educational system. By the late nineteenth century, though, the Expert Class was hawking "consolidation"—abolishing tiny district academies and herding children into centralized schools. As the Nebraska superintendent of public instruction remarked in 1873, "Parents are often very poor judges of what a school should be."

The centralization of schools was bitterly resisted at the local level: The stakes were nothing less than community pride and autonomy. "The conversion of the people through propaganda is essential to successful consolidation," U.S. Bureau of Education chairwoman Adelaide S. Baylor said in 1923. So urban papers were filled with horror stories of forlorn young 'uns, mis-educated in one-room shacks, learning that the world is flat and dental hygiene is the devil's trade.

But researchers found little difference between the achievements of students in one-room schools and those in consolidated education factories, so by the 1950s, the consolidators came up with a new rationale: rural schools were a threat to national defense.

The high priest of Cold War consolidation was James B. Conant, the chemist and Harvard University president who had been a major in the Army's Chemical Warfare Service during the First World War and a Manhattan Project administrator during the Second. Mustard gas, the atom bomb...consolidation was the logical next step in the career of Conant the Barbarian. With a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, he produced a series of scowling, widely publicized reports on American education.

The first order of business, Conant demanded, must be "the elimination of the small high school." He declared that no graduating class of fewer than 100 students ought to be tolerated. Defenders of small schools were "still living in imagination in a world which knew neither nuclear weapons nor Soviet imperialism." The "struggle between the free nations and Communism" creates "a special national interest which ought to affect educational planning." The fewer the schools and the more uniform the curricula, Conant argued, the easier to achieve "democratic unity" and high scores on science tests.

But how to wipe out small schools across the fruited plain? Public opinion ruled out the atom bomb, so Conant urged "compulsory measures...without recourse to popular vote." Conant was in no mood to hear a lot of guff about long bus rides or sentimental attachments to the old hometown. "Geography may sometimes be legitimate justification for a small high school, but all too often it is merely an excuse. Human nature—not geography—offers the real explanation." By "human nature" he meant such immeasurables as love, kinship, and loyalty, factors that had no place in his equations.

Though Conant groused that of all his recommendations consolidation was "the one most vigorously attacked," it proceeded apace. The number of school districts fell faster than Christa McAuliffe's *Challenger*: from 127,531 in 1932 to 83,718 in 1950, 40,520 in 1960, 17,995 in 1970, and fewer than 15,000 today.

"Parents are often very poor judges of what a school should be."

Tens of thousands of little schools disappeared, and the communities that drew their distinct identities from these schools melted into the Great American Nothingness. In his marvelous volume *The Old Country School*, Wayne E. Fuller wrote, "To close a country school was to destroy an institution that held the little rural community together. It was to wipe out the one building the people of the district had in common and, in fact, to destroy the community.... Even more important, as far as the farmers were concerned, the destruction of their school meant that their power to set the length of the school terms, to employ their teacher, and determine how much they would spend for education would be taken from them and given to some board far removed from their community."

Years after the great eradication of rural schools, and their combination into megaschools full of CD-ROMs and Social Security numbers, scholars are reaching a new consensus: In the words of one, small schools—"those enrolling no more than 400 students in high school"—"may provide better education than their large counterparts, as a function (at least in part) of their small size."

These schools were precisely the ones that James Conant wished to kill. And did kill. But, gee, Columbine sure did have a nice swimming pool.

—Bill Kauffman

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Beat the Press

The hand that rules the press...rules the country—Judge Learned Hand

Media Sins Create a Green Saint

Last fall, deadpan Luddite Ralph Nader predicted that if he cost Al Gore the presidential election, it would be a blessing in disguise. Since Bush and Gore both were tools of the polluter lobby, Nader argued, Gore was the far more dangerous candidate. In "a choice between a provocateur and an 'anesthetizer,' I'd rather have a provocateur," Nader assured his followers. "It would mobilize us."

Not only is the environmental movement mobilized, it's moving like the *Wehrmacht* on French soil—unopposed and attacking without provocation. And the press is behaving like those helpful French valets who carried German luggage. On issue after issue, the mainstream media have offered, at best, only token skepticism toward a relentless torrent of environmental hooey.

President Bush asked the National Academy of Sciences to present him with a report assessing what we do and do not know about global warming. When the 28-page report was released, reporters eager to maintain their journalistic detachment opted to read, it seemed, only the first paragraph or the press releases.

The NAS report made no bones about the fact that Earth is getting warmer, and confirmed the possibility that human activity contributes to some extent to that warming. But the report also noted that warming may be part of the standard, long-established ebb and flow of the world climate. Beyond these hedged findings, the scientists went into serious on-the-one-hand/on-the-other-hand mode. Harvard astrophysicist Sallie Baliunas and *TAE*'s James Glassman noted in the *Weekly Standard* that the thin report contained the words "uncertain" or "uncertainty" 43 times.

And yet a CNN reporter mischaracterized the report as "a unanimous decision that global warming is real, is getting worse, and is due to man. There is no wiggle room." The *New York Times* matter-of-factly asserted in a news story that the report "concluded that temperatures are rising because of human activities." New York *Daily News* TV critic Eric Mink wrote, "There's no scientific doubt that the global climate is warming, and there's no scientific doubt that human activity is responsible."

An even more crystalline example of the press exploding into a full dash toward environmental buffoonery is the case of Ian Thomas. Hailed around the globe as, in the words of England's *Guardian*, "mapmaking's first modern martyr," Ian Thomas was a contract worker droning away in the belly of the United States Geological Survey by day, and an environmentalist true believer...well, also by day. His official job was to map the migratory patterns of birds on the Chesapeake Bay. Instead he decided to map the migratory patterns of Arctic caribou. Quite simply, he didn't know what he was doing. He "concluded" that the caribou just happened to be calving on the exact spot where the Bush administration wanted to poke around for oil in ANWR. He posted his *ad hoc* map—after 15 minutes work—on the USGS web site.

Thomas lost his job. Apparently his unauthorized posting of an inaccurate map was simply the last straw for a hot dog activist who liked to play by his own rules in the go-go world of cartography. What's relevant, however, is that he didn't lose his job at the hands of nefarious caribou-hating Republicans. He was fired by his fed-up liberal Democrat civil service boss.

But that didn't matter. Thomas sent out an e-mail all but declaring that Bush had swung by his suburban Maryland cubicle to fire a no-good commie caribou-lover. "You don't have to burn books now," Thomas declared. "You just press the delete key." Within days, a worldwide network of scientists, techno-geeks, university professors, foundation warriors and, of course, enviro-mujahadeen were declaring their solidarity with this Joan of Arc of maps. Fully 88 environmental groups sent a letter to Gale Norton charging that Thomas' dismissal amounted to "a chilling message to all government scientists."

Everybody from the *Los Angeles Times* and the Associated Press to French television bought into the Thomas-as-Martyr story. The *Guardian* concluded from the Thomas affair that "On the evidence of its environmental policies to date, this administration is not merely pro-business; it actually appears to hold a grudge against the natural world." And, of course, the comic strip "Doonesbury" savaged the Bushies for firing Thomas.

Eventually the facts of why Thomas was let go caught up to the press, but not before Thomas had become an eternal Dashboard Saint for the truth-be-damned core of the environmental movement. "He became a cult hero because this is the story that everyone wanted to hear," explained a biologist in the *Washington Post*. "There is an urban legend growing out of this."

All of this goes a long way to confirming the Naderite prophecy. Environmentalists are so worked up that they'd rather suffer the minor embarrassment of false starts than miss an opportunity to score points. And the line judges in the media would be far quicker to spot those missteps as they happened if they weren't rooting for the team in the green uniforms.

—Jonah Goldberg

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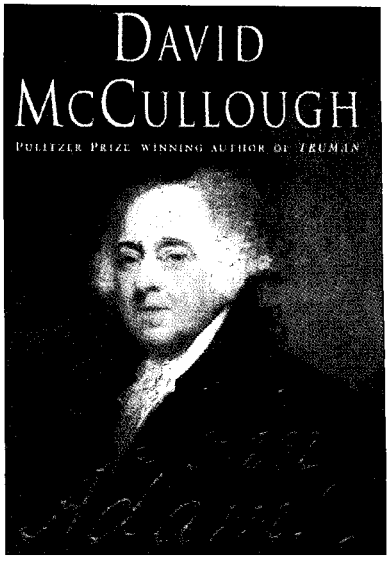
BookTalk



. . . OF WHICH REASON KNOWS NOTHING

By William Marina

John Adams
By David McCullough
Simon & Schuster, 353 pages, $35

As David McCullough's new biography of John Adams suggests, Adams and Thomas Jefferson will remain forever linked within the history of the origins of the American Republic. The author apparently began with the intention of writing about both men, but ended up focusing on Adams.

McCullough has divided Adams's life into three sections. The first part takes us from the beginnings of his career through his leadership in the movement that culminated in independence. The second covers his diplomatic efforts in France and London to secure victory during the Revolution, and stability in the years that followed. The final part details his vice presidential years, his Presidency, and his time in retirement. The book culminates with Adams's death on the Fourth of July, 1826, the same day Thomas Jefferson passed away.

How to explain the growing appreciation of John Adams today, while Jefferson's reputation appears to be in decline? Reading McCullough's account of their intertwined lives, many would agree that Jefferson's character appears flawed when compared to Adams's. Thomas Jefferson was a master (like William Jefferson Clinton) of telling people what they wanted to hear. He was capable of a disingenuousness and even duplicity that was alien to Adams. In short, Jefferson lacked the one ingredient most valued by the men of his generation such as George Washington: virtue.

Honesty and personal virtue are where Jefferson fails next to Adams. This is evident in the letters between the two men (though, unfortunately, McCullough fails to assess the correspondence in any great detail). Of course, a man might be honest, even virtuous, yet utterly wrongheaded, so we need to know more about the substance of Adams's beliefs. If I had to select one weakness in this book, it would be McCullough's failure to adequately explore the basic framework of Adams's worldview and values.

While both Adams and Jefferson could agree that there was "a natural aristocracy among men," and that "the grounds of this are virtue and talents," they differed fundamentally about the nature of these talents and how virtue could be taught. As some Chinese scholars have noted, Jefferson was quite Confucian in his thinking. This is not accidental; Confucian notions—such as the idea that an academic system should be the primary basis for identifying human talent—were current in the French philosophical circles so influential on Jefferson, having been imported from China by French Jesuit missionaries.

Thus Jefferson favored a state-supported school system to seek out the talented among "the rabble." Adams, on the other hand, understood that there are many talents in a market-oriented free society beyond academic ones. Those who believe Adams incapable of humor might reflect on his reply to Jefferson that even a king's mistress displays certain talents.

Adams believed that virtue could only be taught by role models in the family and in the larger society, especially by leaders. As Americans observe the behavior of their leaders today—the lack of virtue and the extent of personal corruption—Adams's wisdom appears as insightful as ever.

If an important function of biography is to instruct us by moral example of the good, the bad, and the tragic, then McCullough's book is a flawed effort. He offers enough evidence for us to understand why, in the course of his research, he came to appreciate Adams more and Jefferson less in matters of character. And that is useful. But he should have gone further to give us a better sense of Adams's more practical, more widely based definition of merit and talent, and why his worldview is a more relevant guide for us today than Jefferson's mandarin elitism.

Jefferson will always remain popular with those intellectuals who lean toward using government planning to shape the parameters of society. In many ways, Jefferson was the first of the progressives, and there is little wonder why he was so popular among them later. Such persons value "reason" over "experience," just as did the European Enlightenment intellectuals of whom Jefferson was the true American heir.

But there is another tradition, less enamored of "experts" and more trusting of everyday people and evolved social institutions and practices. Alexis de Tocqueville, upon hearing a description of the French bureaucracy emerging in his day, once remarked, "Ah, le system chinois" (the Chinese system). He under-

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stood early on the nature of the rule by reason that academic bureaucrats have used to dominate the modern world from Washington to Brussels to Beijing. I suspect John Adams understood it as well—and wished to avoid it in the new country he helped to establish.

William Marina teaches history at Florida Atlantic University.

OUR ALLY, THE STATE?

By Bruce Ramsey

The Trouble With Government
By Derek Bok
Harvard University Press, 493 pages, $35

Why don't Americans like government? They want their Social Security checks, they want to protect the whooping cranes, and they support the minimum wage. They almost always reelect their senators and representatives. But when polled, the same Americans rank elected pols down among car salesmen and union bosses.

This bothers Derek Bok. In *The Trouble With Government,* the Harvard professor emeritus, famous as a defender of racial preferences, has come again to the defense of the administrative state. Americans, he says, "have come to depend on the State to meet so many of their needs." We aim for a level of security that "no society on earth has achieved without the active leadership of the State," yet have a "profound distrust of the federal establishment."

With such a suspicious frame of mind, Americans are unlikely to get the bold new social programs they seem to want. "Voters may be unwilling to accept additional taxes," Bok worries. Further, he says, all this suspicion might "eventually weaken the moral authority of the State," which would be even a worse thing, because the State "is the one administrative agency that can define, enunciate, and validate a set of common moral standards and obligations for all the people."

The core of this book is Bok's desire to make government work better so that we will quit bellyaching about it and accept more of it. He repeatedly compares us with other industrial welfare states, which have been so much better in seeing that every citizen has a doctor and every worker is in a union. Americans would have these things, too, if we weren't so suspicious of government.

What is the matter with us? Why did we reject the Clinton health plan? Why don't we have more government television channels, or pay "subsidies to make serious public-affairs programming more attractive to commercial producers"? Americans have a tradition, unfortunately still extant, of "individualism, the reliance on competition and the distrust of authority."

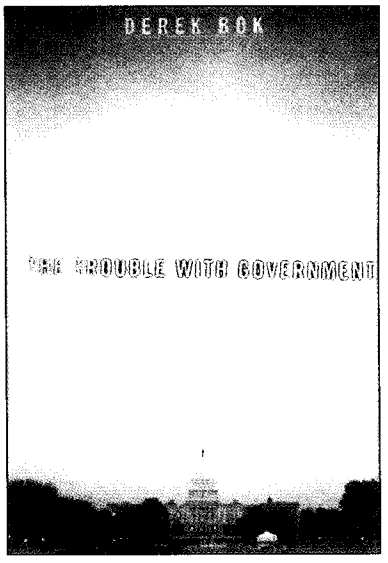
This tradition is embodied in our Constitution, which sets up a structure for a limited government. And this is not an efficient structure for the administrative state. Yet it is unlikely this structure will change. As Bok writes sarcastically, "To alter the Constitutional framework is to tamper with the sacred text." Not sacred to Derek Bok, apparently. In this book, the very word "sacred" has invisible quotation marks around it.

In another place, Bok writes, "Our expensive regulatory process can be viewed as a monument to the pervasive distrust of official action and the desire to protect citizens in any possible way from the arbitrary use of power. Unfortunately, the costs of maintaining the monument are far greater than those of a more informal, cooperative system."

A "monument"—a word used, like "sacred," to mock what other people revere. Bok respects these American traditions like he might respect his great aunt's evangelism.

Bok notes that America tried once during the twentieth century to construct a "collaborative, corporativist" system, under Franklin Roosevelt. Here was government lathered on so thick that the federal power undertook to determine the correct procedure for extracting a chicken from a coop. The Supreme Court, however, declared it unconstitutional.

Ah, the Constitution. That document again. Bok would pretty clearly like to amend it heavily, but saying so would be too un-mainstream. And that is the central problem with this book. The most engaging questions, like what the purpose and structure of the State ought to be, are not discussed. All that's left to argue are particular details, like campaign finance reform, regulatory revisions, and how to exhort more Americans to vote.



Bok favors more restrictions on how citizens may back political candidates. He allows, however, that "public subsidies, by themselves, would simply encourage more challengers to run for office." He ends up arguing for a ban on soft money and tighter rules on independent expenditures.

Bok favors regulatory reform, including cost-benefit analysis. He allows that the Superfund law is foolish legislation based on alarmist journalism. He supports the use of market forces in regulation, but notes that such systems still require government rules and officials to enforce them.

Bok thinks that too few poor people vote, and sees this as a big problem. If more poor people voted, they would get bigger welfare benefits, and maybe even "comprehensive social legislation." He is attracted to compulsory voting, but recognizes that Americans would never accept it.

He is also attracted to National Service. Bok finds the idea "all the more compelling now that the disappearance of the draft has removed one of the few opportunities to gather Americans from all walks of life in a common civic undertaking." But the unions wouldn't allow the national servers to do anything useful, and the libertarians would fight the compulsion part. The idea, he laments, is "premature."

He considers reforms of Congress. One idea he likes is voting for parties only, not candidates, so that no American could ever split his vote. Then the

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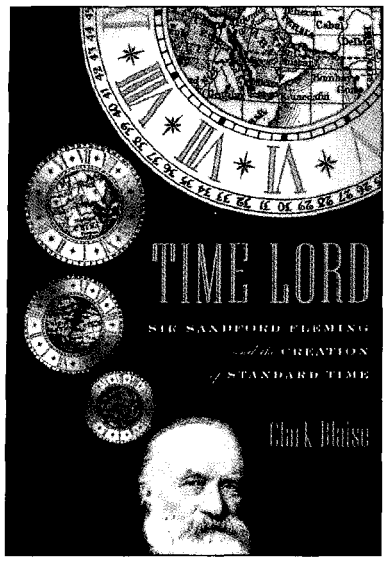

government could really pass social legislation, and get things done. But Americans wouldn't go for that, either. He suggests instead that Congress reduce the size of committees and have more hearings in closed session.

And so it goes throughout the book. Bok's heart clearly leans left. If anything is sacred to him, it's government. He longs for a muscular, confident, controlling government that could "define, enunciate, and validate a set of common moral standards and obligations for all the people." He would have loved the 1930s. But to embrace state power with such enthusiasm today is not seemly. So he has written a faux-moderate book, in which he toys briefly with full-blast progressivism, backs away, and offers up the same ideas that emanate from the talking heads on television.

Bruce Ramsey is an editorial writer at the Seattle Times.

SEIZING THE HOUR

By Philip Jenkins

Time Lord: Sir Sandford Fleming and the Creation of Standard Time
By Clark Blaise
Pantheon Books, 272 pages, $24

When it is noon in Los Angeles, the time in New York City is 3 p.m., and it's eight in the evening in London. As we progress eastwards around the globe, the time changes in neat hourly increments every thousand miles or so, until we reach the International Date Line which traverses the Pacific Ocean, where the day shifts. The fact that the world measures its time in such a well-structured way seems so obvious that few of us pause to think how matters could ever have been different. Global standard time is just *there*, like the sun and the moon.

Yet of course this organizational framework is far from natural, and in fact was only imposed by a "Prime Meridian Conference" in Washington, D.C. in 1884. Before that, cities and regions controlled their own time on a local, ad hoc basis. For any given community, the point of day at which the sun stood overhead was declared to be noon, and other hours were calculated accordingly. This state of affairs was fine for a world moving at the speed of horse and rider, but it became thoroughly inadequate following the advent of railroads and steamships.

Just imagine planning to catch a travel connection in Constantinople at, say, 6 p.m. on Tuesday when you had no idea how that city's time structure corresponded to those of neighboring lands. In 1880, the transportation hub of St. Louis had to observe no less than six official railroad times. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the world was experiencing a process of globalization quite as far-reaching and intoxicating as that of our own day. Then as now, problems arising from expanding worldwide communications demanded imaginative solutions.

In the case of standard time, the great innovator was Sir Sandford Fleming (1827-1915), a Scottish-born engineer who undertook surveying work for the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway. Inevitably he encountered the scheduling difficulties arising from different time zones employed across the vast expanse of Canada, and he recognized a crying need for standardization. Fleming became the founder and principal spokesman for the emerging standard time movement that triumphed with the 1884 conference. The result was the system we know today, with 24 time zones, each corresponding to 15 degrees of longitude.

As part of a larger Victorian pattern, Fleming secured a triumph of human-designed order over the natural world. A great strength of Clark Blaise's well-researched and enjoyable biography is his awareness of the wider cultural implications in such acts, repeated over and over during the growth of capitalist modernity and the erosion of pre-modern traditions. As Blaise summarizes, "You can have speed, or you can have tradition, but you can't have both."

Fleming is anything but a household name, but the significance of his work was (dare I use the word?) immeasurable. "Natural time—the time of the gods, the sun, and the moon—starts in a savage, glorious myth and ends on an Irish railway platform in 1876, when Sandford Fleming missed his train," writes Blaise. To appreciate the extent of Fleming's accomplishment, it is helpful to recall that the plot of Jules Verne's 1873 novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* depends on the hero failing to notice that he has gained an entire day by traveling round the globe, thereby enabling him to win his bet. Fleming was dealing in matters that seemed extraordinarily complex and unmanageable in his day, but which became merely routine once he had devised his elegant solution.

Fleming was part of an age when people believed that science and technology could impose harmonious order on the natural world, promoting universal betterment in the process. Describing his vision in those terms indicates just how wide a gulf separates his world from ours. If a scheme to impose global standard time were proposed afresh today, the objections would be legion. Post-modern academics would bemoan the glorification of rigid linear notions of time, and resist the supplanting of subjective local realities. Feminists might complain that this was par excellence a *masculine* vision, derived from exaggerated scientism and objectivity. And Third World activists would object to a model so obviously founded on imperialist and business interests. The impudence of the hegemonists in placing London at the temporal center of the world! Any global time scheme proposed today would certainly have to shift its standard meridian every

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Hollywood Report

High-Tech Mogul to Transform Cinema?

Imagine going to your local megaplex and instead of purchasing tickets for the latest blockbuster, buying ones to see an airing of the Stanley Cup finals, or the latest Broadway show. In addition to viewing the action on a 50-foot screen in digital surround-sound, you'd get behind-the-scenes glimpses a person watching at home or live wouldn't be able to see.

Well, if Philip Anschutz gets his way, having such options at the neighborhood cinema may soon become a reality. Earlier this year, Anschutz—whom *Forbes* estimates to be the sixteenth richest individual in the world, worth around $15 billion—stunned the business world when he began purchasing movie theater chains like United Artists, Regal, and Edwards that had fallen into serious financial trouble amidst theater overbuilding.

Given the woes that theaters have experienced over the last few years, sinking more than $700 million into the business (which bought Anschutz close to 7,000 of the country's 37,000 screens) seems about as smart as pouring money into dot-coms in February. A movie theater buy seems even more surprising if you know that the Colorado-based Anschutz is an evangelical Christian. The trendy and often amoral views that suffuse most Hollywood films wouldn't seem to hold much attraction for him. But Anschutz's move may actually give him a chance to both make theater exhibition profitable again (while turning the business in a different direction), and encourage entertainment that squares with his generally culturally conservative views.

Movie attendance hasn't changed much for years (having long since become mostly an adolescent activity, with two-thirds of all movie tickets sold to 15- to 24-year-olds). Yet when the rest of the retail world became enamored of giant stores, theater exhibitors also decided to shift to bigger multiplexes, some of them housing 15-20 screens and featuring stadium-style seating.

Gone, suddenly, were the lines around the block when a blockbuster opened. When *Tomb Raider* opened this summer, it had an average of 19 daily show times at its megaplex. This kind of availability ended the tradition of a film staying practically all summer the way *Jaws* or *Star Wars* did in the 1970s.

Theater owners imagined this a recipe for great business. Unfortunately, their product isn't selling. Movie ticket sales are up only 20 percent over the last quarter century—much slower than the 25 percent population growth and the doubling of the U.S. economy. Meanwhile, over that same period, the number of movie screens has jumped by more than 100 percent—creating a huge glut.

Theaters hand over to studios a majority of the money from ticket sales. They now make most of their money on concessions, and usually don't see revenue from ticket sales until a film has played for almost six weeks—which rarely happens now that everyone who wants to see a film can get in during the first two weeks.

So how does Philip Anschutz plan to bring profits back to the exhibition business? For now, he's not giving interviews, but insiders say what he probably has in mind will be about as significant for increasing theater business as when owners first hung "Air Conditioned Inside" signs in box office windows 50 years ago. It's called digital technology, and it may make film obsolete.

Converting a theater from film to computerized digital projection costs about $50,000 per screen. But in the long run it saves the exorbitant costs of shipping and handling large canisters of celluloid. More important, digital transmission would let theaters fill their screens with spectacles other than expensive studio releases. And Anschutz's Qwest Communications, which owns fiber-optic lines across the nation, is the perfect technological vehicle to deliver digital content.

Philip Anschutz

Owning so many theaters also probably guarantees Anschutz a place at the creative table. He already has a deal with Paramount. One planned picture, called *Joshua*, is a story of Christ's resurrection in the present day South. Says one executive who works for Anschutz's Crusader Entertainment, "We would not have made *Hannibal*, and we would not have made *Scary Movie*. But we would have been happy to make *Remember the Titans*." Sounds like a boss with good taste.

—John Meroney

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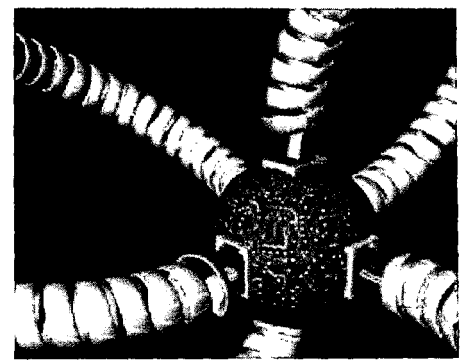
Edited by Martin Morse Wooster

the Digest



Summaries of important new research from the nation's universities, think tanks, and investigative publications

POLITICS

A Little Law Goes A Long Way

Jonathan Rauch, "Law and Disorder," in *The New Republic* (April 30, 2001), 1220 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In this article, based on an AEI Bradley Lecture, Brookings writer-in-residence Jonathan Rauch denounces the "mindless legalism" which he believes "is becoming a menace to everyday decency in American life."

In the past, many small transgressions were addressed by what Rauch calls "Hidden Law," in which minor offenses were tolerated as long as the transgressors were discreet. Abortions, for example, were allowed if they took place quietly, ensuring that abortions were "legal, available, rare, and morally disreputable." Similarly, before campuses had speech codes, students who said stupid or insulting things were tolerated as long as apologies were made. The result: Universities were free of investigations, lengthy trials, and "regular campus uproars."

The enemy of hidden law, according to Rauch, is "bureaucratic legalism," which believes that the only way to settle conflicts is "through an elaborate and highly articulated set of procedures." Like bureaucracy in general, "bureaucratic legalism is generally slow, cumbersome, expensive, inflexible, and overcentralized." Moreover, bureaucratic legalism prevents reconciliation and escalates conflicts.

A quarter-century ago, most Americans assumed that regulation could fix all economic problems; today, we know that markets should be as free as possible. If more Americans would "holler publicly instead of just grumbling among themselves" the next time lawyers get out of hand, then more people would realize that the courts are not the best place to settle most disputes.

ECONOMICS

In the Name of Deregulation

Alfred E. Kahn, *Whom the Gods Would Destroy, or How Not to Deregulate*, AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

From the failure of new local telephone companies to compete against the Big Bells to the electricity crisis in California, it seems that "deregulation" is the culprit for a wide variety of economic woes. But Kahn, a Cornell economist who led the effort to deregulate airlines in the 1970s, suggests that one ought to look carefully at what today's regulatory agencies mean by "deregulation." Far too often, he says, these agencies "regulate pervasively in the name of 'deregulation.'"

Consider the recent mergers of giant telephone companies SBC and Ameritech. In both cases, the FCC imposed all sorts of requirements before the merger to benefit the urban and rural poor and the underserved. If the firm fails to meet the FCC requirements, it has to pay a "voluntary incentive payment to the U.S. Treasury" of up to $1.1 billion.

Kahn notes that these terms don't necessarily foster competition; they "dictate the *results*" that the FCC "thinks would have been produced by competition *but for* the merger." Thus the SBC-Ameritech merger is "richly illustrative of the dangers of deregulation going wrong."

Another example comes with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which mandates that "Baby Bell" local telephone monopolies allow competitors to use their local exchange facilities at costs set by the FCC. This gives the Baby Bells no reason to innovate, since competing local telephone companies get a free ride on investments the Baby Bells make in new technologies such as high-speed lines. If regulatory agencies wish to urge dynamic competition, they should try to steer the market as little as possible.

Why Europeans Fear the Rich

Alberto Alesina, Rafael Di Tella, and Robert MacCulloch, *Inequality and Happiness: Are Europeans and Americans Different?*, NBER Working Paper W8198, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

Economists Alesina and Di Tella of Harvard and MacCulloch of the London School of Economics looked at

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22 years (1972-94) of the University of Chicago's General Social Survey and 19 years (1975-94) of the European Union's Euro-Barometer poll, and then correlated this polling data with statistics about inflation, unemployment, income, and murder rates. They conclude that "Americans are not affected by inequality while there is a well-defined negative affect in Europe."

In general, Europeans are more miserable than Americans, since 11.5 percent of Americans surveyed said they were "not too happy," while 19.6 percent of Europeans said they were dissatisfied with life. But in Europe, there are far more numbers of poor people and left-wingers who are disgruntled. While 12.8 percent of American leftists said they were unhappy, 23.9 percent of European leftists were miserable. And while 18.2 percent of Americans in the lowest 25 percent of income earners said they were unhappy, the comparable figure for the European poor was 28.6 percent.

The authors suggest that social mobility is the key to happiness. "Opportunities for mobility," they write, "are (or are perceived to be) higher in the U.S. than in Europe." The American poor aren't bothered by the rich because there are many opportunities for them to climb the income ladder. But in more hierarchical European nations, there are fewer opportunities to advance, and so the unhappy populace expresses its dissatisfaction at the polls by supporting politicians who favor a strongly redistributionist welfare state.

SUVs Are Safe

Douglas Coate and James VanderHoff, "The Truth About Light Trucks," in *Regulation* (Spring 2001), Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In recent years, some experts have accused "light trucks"—which include minivans, pickups, and SUVs—of increasing highway fatalities. In 1998, for example, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) director Ricardo Martinez declared that replacing light trucks with cars would reduce deaths caused by cars by 2,000 a year, because cars tended to be damaged when they hit light trucks. But there are more light trucks on the road each year—and the highway death rate is steadily declining.

Rutgers economists Coate and VanderHoff compared light truck use between 1994-97 with a wide variety of factors, including rain, snow, death rates, suicide rates, and education. They found that during that period, light truck driver registrations increased by 5 percent, while as a result single-vehicle deaths per driver fell by 7.5 percent and multiple-vehicle deaths per driver fell by 2 percent. They also found that the better educated a driver was, the more likely he was to drive a light truck.

Other factors may have contributed to the falling highway fatality rate, including tougher drunk driving penalties and mandatory seat belt laws. But Coate and VanderHoff believe that light trucks, which are larger, stiffer, and higher off the ground than conventional cars, have done their part to make the roads safer. They estimate that 2,000 lives were spared in the period they studied because of increased light truck use. "If light trucks replaced more cars on the nation's roads," they conclude, "the roadway fatality rate would decline further."

SOCIETY

Variety in Christian Schools

David Sikkink, "Speaking in Many Tongues," in *Education Matters* (Summer 2001), 226 Littauer North Yard, 1875 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

In the twentieth century, only about 10 percent of American students went to private schools. But the type of schools that children attend has changed dramatically. Between 1969 and 1999, the number of students at Catholic institutions fell from over 4.5 million to around 3 million. At the same time, the number of students educated at non-Catholic private schools rose from under a million to 3.5 million.

Many of these students are attending conservative Christian schools. University of Notre Dame sociologist Sikkink contends that although these schools are traditional and Christian they provide "a healthy diversity."

There are many different kinds of traditional Christian schools. The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) has operated its network of over 1,000 schools (more than any denomination save for the Catholics) since the nineteenth century. Evangelicals tend to insist on academic excellence. Fundamentalist schools stress personal character and the literal interpretation of the Bible.

Nearly all of these schools have modest endowments, and rely on tuition for most of their budgets. Because of this, parents have a considerable say in what their children are taught. These schools are religiously diverse, and thus stress "more generic forms of the Christian faith." However, nearly all Christian schools, including fundamentalist ones, spend far more time teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic than they do studying the Bible.

Because Christian schools are traditional institutions yet highly flexible and adaptable, they "keep alive or develop instructional approaches and educational philosophies that may not have an opportunity to thrive in public schools." For example, while most public schools use "whole language" methods to teach reading, Christian schools still rely on phonics.

Christian schools, Sikkink concludes, have not been rigid authoritarian institutions for decades. Instead, these schools offer a "diversity that in many ways contributes to the public good."

The Truth About Racial Profiling

Heather Mac Donald, "The Myth of Racial Profiling," in *City Journal* (Spring 2001), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

There's been an increasing uproar about "racial profiling," where police officers allegedly pull cars off the highway solely to harass black drivers. But Manhattan Institute fellow

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Mac Donald argues that good policing involves detaining suspects based on many factors. Moreover, efforts to eliminate "racial profiling" could burden officers with red tape and allow criminals to go free.

People who claim "racial profiling" exists offer two types of evidence, Mac Donald argues: "anecdotal, which is of limited value, and statistical, which upon examination proves entirely worthless." It may be true that some rogue cops might be obnoxious toward blacks, but after police officers began videotaping highway stops, "most charges of police racism, testified to under oath, have been disproved as lies."

There is also no statistical evidence supporting racial profiling. An ACLU study of Philadelphia traffic stops noted that the race of the suspect was not recorded in half the stops, making any racial comparisons invalid. Studies by Temple University social psychologist John Lamberth, which were used successfully in ACLU lawsuits in Maryland and New Jersey, compared traffic stops for drivers going 1 to 6 miles over the speed limit. But since most police only stop drivers who speed excessively, Lamberth's study is useless in judging how cops actually behave.

While Mac Donald finds little evidence of "hard racial profiling" (where race is the only criterion), there is more evidence of "soft racial profiling," where police use race as one of many factors. For example, a cop might use a DEA profile to search a car that happens to have black occupants, if the drivers and passengers don't agree on where they're going, or if the spare tire is in the back seat.

But in the wake of "racial profiling" scandals, police forces accused of profiling end up dramatically reducing their crime-fighting activities. In New Jersey, for example, state attorney general Peter Verniero issued a report in 1999 claiming that "racial profiling" was rampant on the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway. Verniero personally freed 128 defendants he claimed were victims of "racial profiling," including one car where the drivers were allegedly going 74 mph in a 55 mph zone and allegedly smoking pot and drinking. The result: Drug arrests fell by 25 percent on the two highways in 2000. When the mayor and police chief of Minneapolis accused some officers of "racial profiling," traffic stops fell by 63 percent.

At least 30 states are considering bills that would require police officers to collect racial statistics on the traffic stops they make. Such an effort, Mac Donald argues, would cause officers to cut back enforcement for fear of being accused of being racists, and if that happens the true victims of the "racial-profiling crusade" will be "law-abiding minorities" who will be guarded by police forces powerless to fight crime.

When Foundations Shape the News

Rick Edmonds, "How Foundations Use the News Media to Shape an Agenda," in *Poynter Report* (Spring 2001), 801 Third Street South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Advertisers have long helped pay the bills for newspapers, magazines, and television. Now the media have a new source of funds: foundations. But while corporate advertising is separate from news stories, foundations are increasingly funding reporting. Edmonds notes that "the agenda behind the grant goes lightly questioned."

The most aggressive foundation interested in shaping the news is the Pew Charitable Trusts. Pew has spent at least $12 million on the "civic journalism" movement, encouraging Americans to be more involved in their communities. It is also a major benefactor of such magazines as *American Journalism Review*, *Governing*, and *Campaigns and Elections*. Pew also pays for the religion and arts reporting units on National Public Radio, and is spending $5.8 million over four years to pay for media reporting on PBS' "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer." Last year, Pew gave $1.3 million to the New America Foundation, which gives grants to liberal journalists who write for *The New Republic* and other journals.

A few years ago, the Kaiser Foundation, created by industrialist Henry J. Kaiser (who also founded the Kaiser Permanente HMO), abandoned medical research for health-related activism. The Kaiser Foundation works closely with "ER," and creates a "Following ER" segment used by many 11 p.m. Thursday newscasts. Kaiser also provides "mini-grants" of $5,000-10,000 to medical reporters who come up with ideas that Kaiser approves of.

Consider the Florence and John Schumann Foundation, a grantmaker which is "a prolific funder of liberal publications...with a tightening special focus on campaign finance reform." In 1996, the Schumann Foundation gave the *Columbia Journalism Review* $2 million. The review then published many articles supporting campaign finance reform. Journalists, Edmonds argues, ought to be as skeptical of foundation grants as they are of other interest groups' attempts to influence the press.

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907.

BOOKTALK *continued from page 54*

few years, in order to allow the "prime" honor to be shared among a diversity of cities and states, of various races and creeds. Greenwich Mean Time, indeed!

Today, it would take a bold advocate to defend Fleming's rational and progressive scheme, which is why Blaise's unabashed celebration of "the time lord" is so refreshing. So the next time we check what the local time would be in Berlin or Hong Kong before placing a transoceanic phone call, let us recall Sir Sandford Fleming, and give praise where praise is due.

Philip Jenkins is professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University.

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Think TANK with BEN WATTENBERG

SPECIAL!

Coming to PBS Aug. 23
10:00 PM EDT
Check local listings for time and channel.

On August 23 find out if there's a renaissance of traditional art.

Art Under the Radar

For over a century, modern art has moved from one "ism" to another: Impressionism, Expressionism, Post-Impressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, and on and on. But as a new century dawns, some artists and their patrons look, instead, to preserve, revive and build upon traditional standards.

Among the artists profiled in "Art Under the Radar" are painters Paul Georges, Janet Fish, Graham Nickson and Jacob Collins; classical composer Stefania de Kenessey; and the late sculptor Frederick Hart. These artists may be working within tradition, but they don't think what they're doing is old hat. In fact, many will tell you the avant garde is what has become stale. Is it possible that traditionalism is the next new thing?

Additional guests include Philippe Ségalot, former international director of contemporary art at Christie's; Jed Perl, art critic for the *New Republic*; Hilton Kramer, former art critic for *The New York Times*; Lynne Munson, author of *Exhibitionism: Art in an Era of Intolerance;* and David Levy, director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Don't miss this new Think Tank Special on August 23: Art Under the Radar, from the producers of the award-winning The First Measured Century (Gold Award Winner, 34th Annual Worldfest Competition. Finalist, National Tellys).

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THINK TANK
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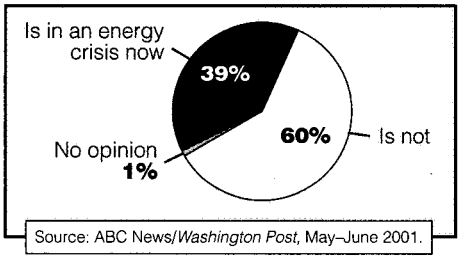
Opinion Pulse

Edited by Karlyn Bowman

THE ENERGY SITUATION

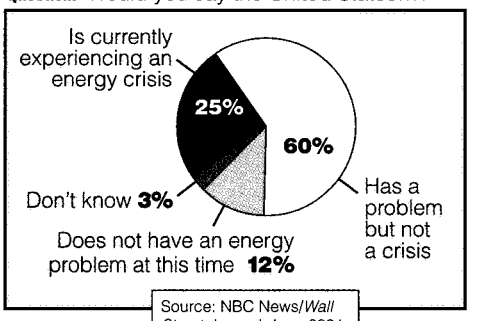
Although most Americans don't think the U.S. is in an energy crisis now, around six in ten expect one in the future. Three-quarters think their fellow citizens take energy supplies for granted and, at this point, most people haven't made big changes in their lifestyle to deal with rising energy costs. Americans think the Bush energy plan does too little to conserve energy. They are divided about whether it does the right amount or too little to produce it.

Question: Do you think the United States...?



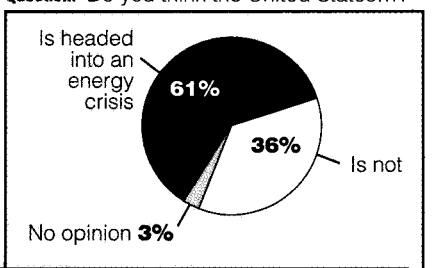
Source: ABC News/*Washington Post*, May–June 2001.

Question: Would you say the United States...?



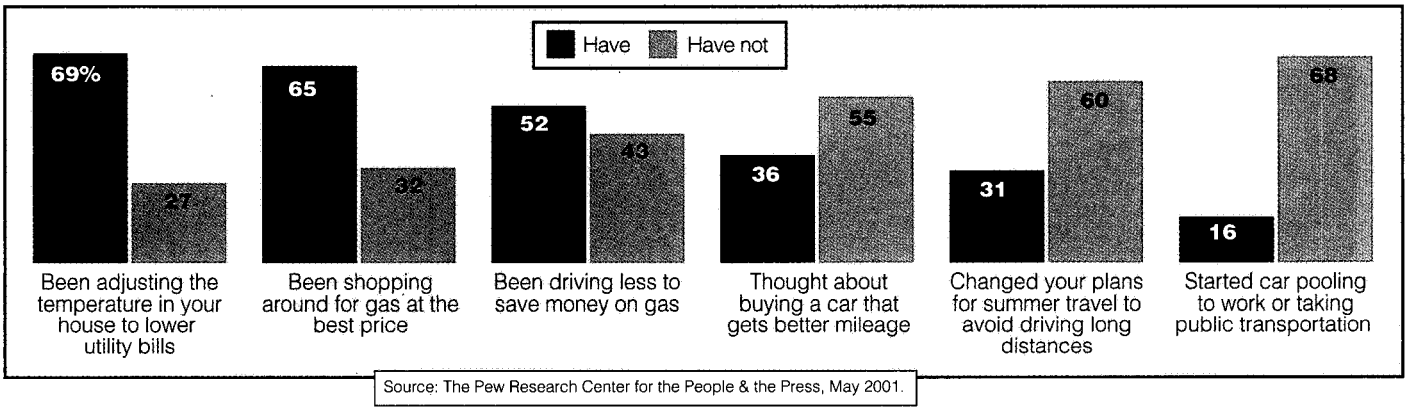
Source: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, June 2001.

Question: Do you think the United States...?



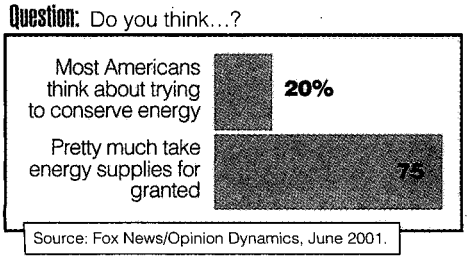
Source: ABC News/*Washington Post*, May–June 2001.

Question: Now I'm going to list a few steps some people may be taking to deal with increasing energy costs. Not everyone will have done these. Have you...?



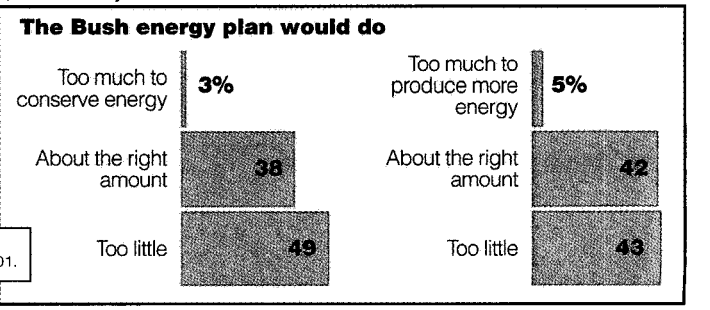
Source: The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, May 2001.

Question: Do you think...?



Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, June 2001.

Question: Do you think...?



Source: The Gallup Organization, May 2001.

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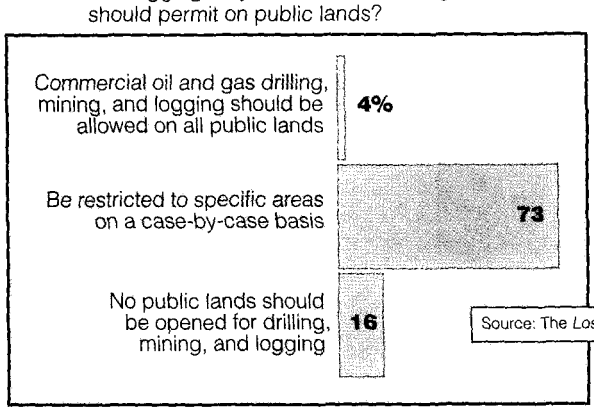
EXPLORATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

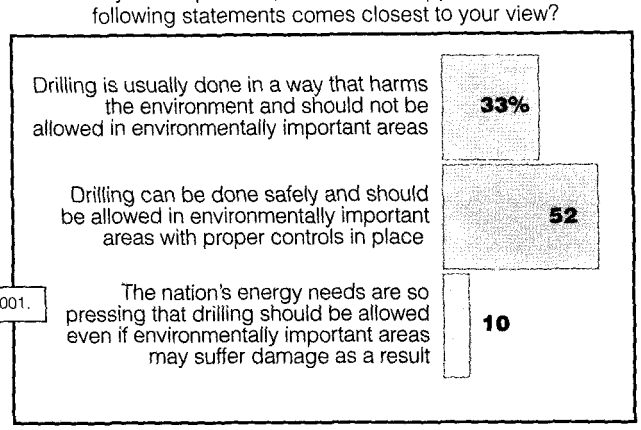
Americans aren't extremists about energy policy. Just 4 percent told *Los Angeles Times* interviewers that commercial oil and gas drilling, mining, and logging should be allowed on *all* public lands, and 16 percent were at the other end of the spectrum, believing that no public lands should be open for such activity. Seventy-three percent want decisions made on a case-by-case basis. Americans are cautious about oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, but they are supportive of opening up some protected areas.

Question: How much commercial oil and gas drilling, mining, and logging do you think the federal government should permit on public lands?

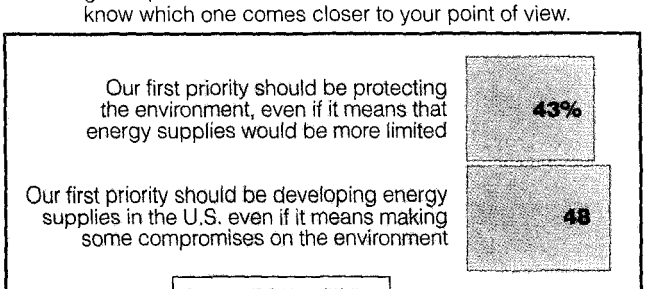


Source: The *Los Angeles Times*, April 2001.

Question: Supporters of oil and gas drilling say it can be done in ways that minimize harm to the environment. Opponents say that in practice, that seldom happens. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

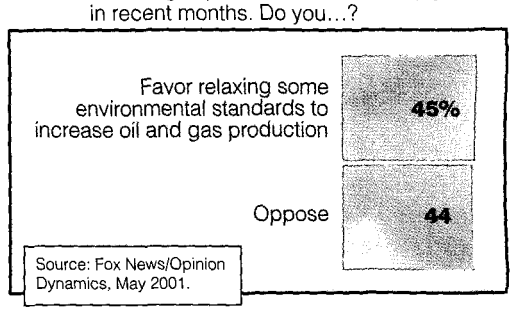


Question: I'm going to read you two statements about oil and gas exploration in the United States and I'd like to know which one comes closer to your point of view.



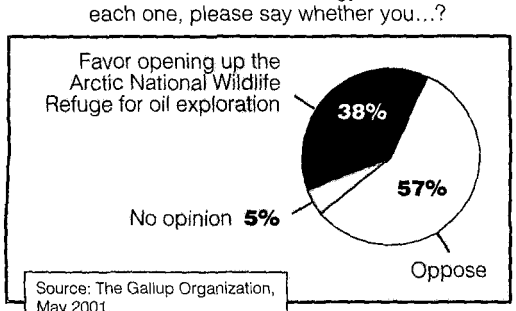
Source: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, June 2001.

Question: Oil and gas prices have risen sharply in recent months. Do you...?



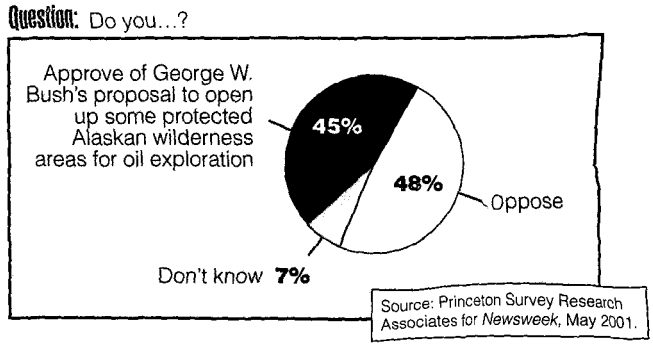
Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, May 2001.

Question: Finally, here are some things that can be done to deal with the energy situation. For each one, please say whether you...?



Source: The Gallup Organization, May 2001.

Question: Do you...?



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for *Newsweek*, May 2001.

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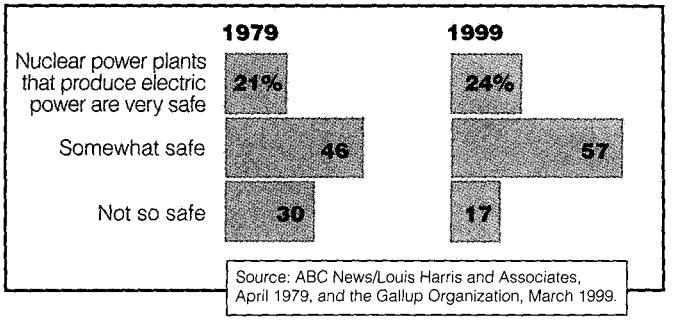
NUCLEAR POWER RECONSIDERED

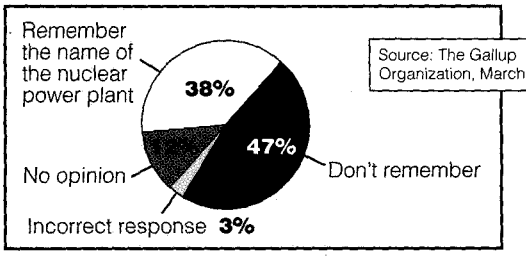
In 1999, 20 years after the Three Mile Island nuclear plant mishap, 81 percent of Americans told Gallup that nuclear power was very or somewhat safe. A near majority could not remember the name of the nuclear reactor involved. Most polls today show more support than opposition to building more nuclear power plants as a way of providing additional electricity. People think of nuclear power as clean, reliable, and safe, but they are still somewhat uneasy about it.

Question: All in all, from what you have heard or read, how safe are...?



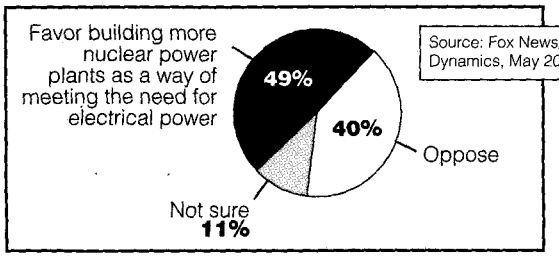
Source: ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, April 1979, and the Gallup Organization, March 1999.

Question: In 1979, about 20 years ago, there was a nuclear power plant breakdown near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Would you happen to...?



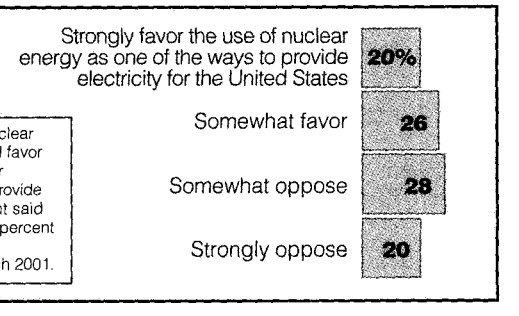
Source: The Gallup Organization, March 1999.

Question: Do you...?



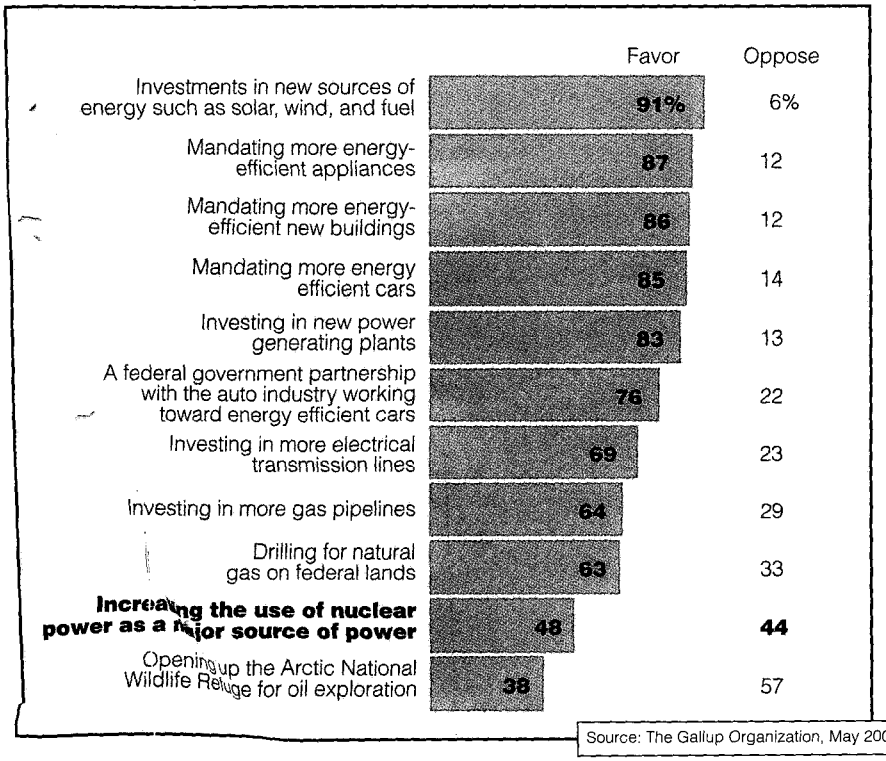
Source: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, May 2001.

Question: Overall, do you...?



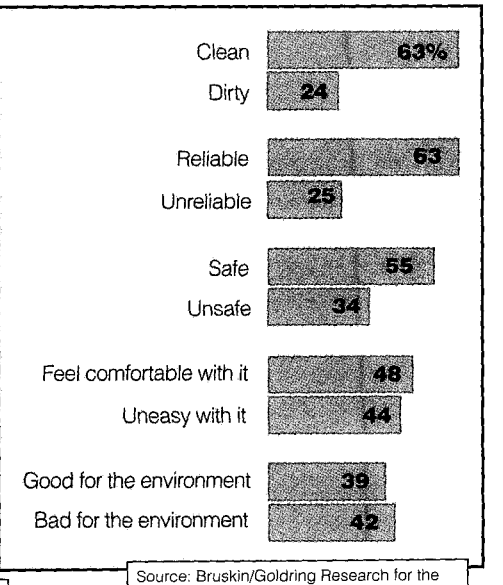
Note: Those who favored the use of nuclear energy were asked whether they would favor or oppose the construction of a nuclear energy plant in their area as a way to provide electricity for the U.S. Thirty-four percent said they would favor construction, but 63 percent said they would oppose it.
Source: The Gallup Organization, March 2001.

Question: Overall, do you favor or oppose...?



Source: The Gallup Organization, May 2001.

Question: I'll read you some pairs of words or phrases. For each pair, please tell me which word or phrase best describes your feelings about the nearest nuclear energy plant?



Source: Bruskin/Goldring Research for the Nuclear Energy Institute, November 1995.

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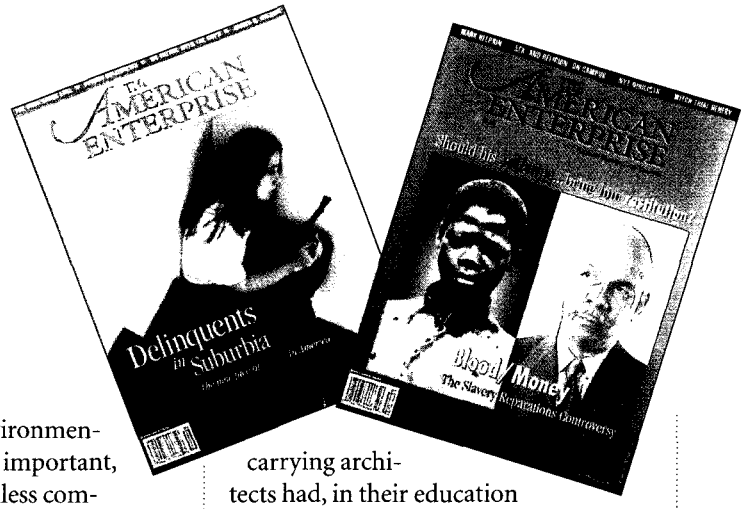
the Mail



While I largely agree with Karl Zinsmeister's conclusions about slavery reparations (Bird's Eye, July/August 2001), one of his important arguments seems faulty to me: "Trying to pay slave reparations in our decade would, as one observer put it, mostly be a case of individuals who were never slaveholders giving money to people who were never slaves. A clear absurdity."

Reparations would only be an absurdity if we construe them as payments from individuals to other individuals. But the point of any payments would be that the United States as a nation is making amends to African Americans as a people.

Reparations should be seen as a symbolic gesture of regret by this nation toward a people it has oppressed. What an appropriate form for these reparations could be is anyone's guess, but that can be worked out in the political arena.

Mr. Zinsmeister's argument that we have already paid this debt through the blood of the Civil War is stronger, and was indeed made by Lincoln himself. But if we can today, in some more conscious way, express our regret for past wrongs, and signal our intention to address present injustices, surely we should do so.

Kevin R. Johnson
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

This missive is prompted by Jennifer Roback Morse's "The Moral Roots of Liberty and Prosperity," with Rabbi Daniel Lapin's addendum thereto (July/August 2001).

While free enterprise, property rights, reduction and elimination of onerous taxes, and getting rid of the tens of thousands of utterly stupid restrictive rules and regulations and environmental strictures are all very important, they are meaningless unless combined with a restoration of freedom of religion, moral absolutes, personal responsibility, and honor.

When I enlisted in the U.S. Army as a teenager in 1940, I was in the midst of a love affair with the United States of America.

Today, I see the hollow shell of America that now exists, with a Constitution that is ignored, subverted, and rewritten to suit, and I must tell my grown children that while the United States could exist more or less as is for the duration of my own lifetime, unless there is a huge moral renaissance, they will live the end of their lives in a totalitarian state.

Unfortunately, this article is unlikely to be read by those who most need to get the message, as the major media will spike it if it ever comes before them.

Lionel I. Nalven
West Palm Beach, Florida

Catesby Leigh's "Historic Preservation Goes Awry" (July/August 2001) has turned a wise eye on that clerkish industry, historic preservation. Certainly, it has become one of the more curious of our time.

Oddly enough, what has propelled this industry is that it has been a rearguard action on the part of those rebelling at the dictatorship of Modernists in architecture. Yet it has long since been largely taken over by Modernist architectural firms. In 1961, in a late protest over the destruction of New York City's Pennsylvania Station, the seried ranks waving the signs were all Modern architects.

Yet, within a generation, these sign-carrying architects had, in their education and in their professional work, turned their backs, with disdain, on traditional architecture and its lessons.

Today, some Modernists are returning to tradition, particularly after federal and state governments began to appropriate funds for restoration. The industry thrives, as all kinds of structures, as Mr. Leigh points out, are fed into the preservation mill.

When the fashion for the Modern dies, which is bound to happen, this curious byproduct will disappear with it.

Henry Hope Reed
President, Classical America
New York, New York

Inadvertently, Detective Ray Wisher ("Joint at the Hip," June 2001) makes a strong case for drug legalization.

About a teenage girl involved with a group of juvenile thieves, Mr. Wisher writes that "while their indulgent moms and dads gave them enough handouts to buy all the beer and joints they could consume, there wasn't enough cash for the $100 or so a night needed for powder cocaine.... And so she and her friends began stealing from relatives, neighbors, classmates, strangers."

We can only infer that, had the cost of cocaine been $10 a night or $5 a night, these teenagers would not have done any stealing at all. Or, they would have engaged in theft only one-tenth as often. Which answers Mr. Wisher's rhetorical question, "Even if you legalize it, how does the addict pay for it?"

Taras Wolansky
Leonia, New Jersey

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail TAE@aei.org. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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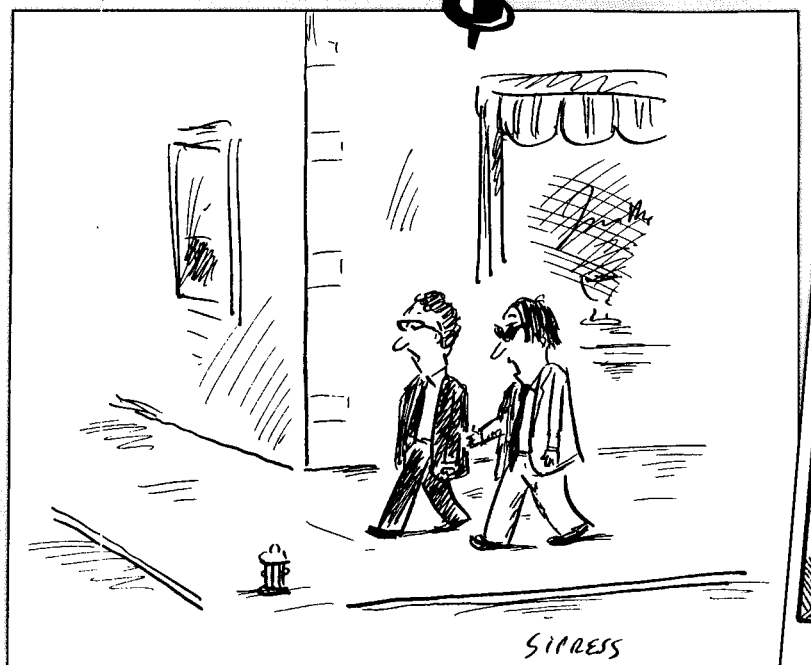
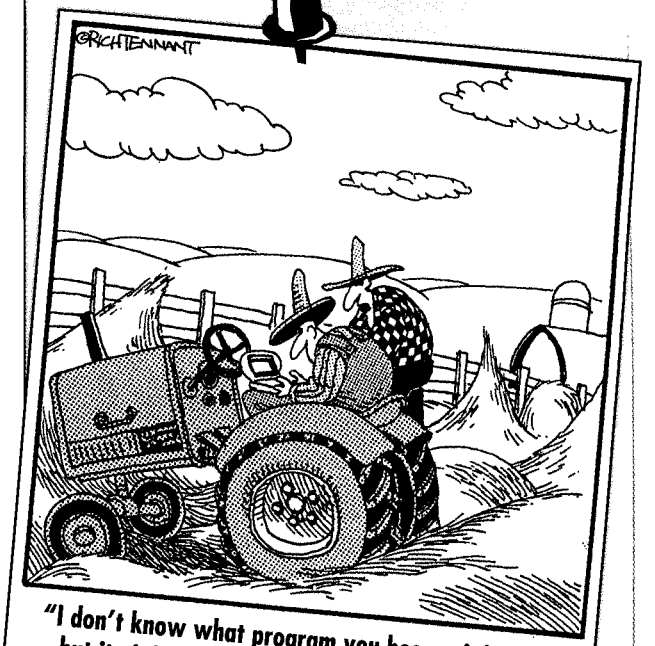


SIPRESS

Someday I want to be rich enough to get rid of everything and live like a monk.



"I don't know what program you been usin' Frank, but it ain't the right one. Look—your menu bar should read, File, Edit, Reap, Gather..."

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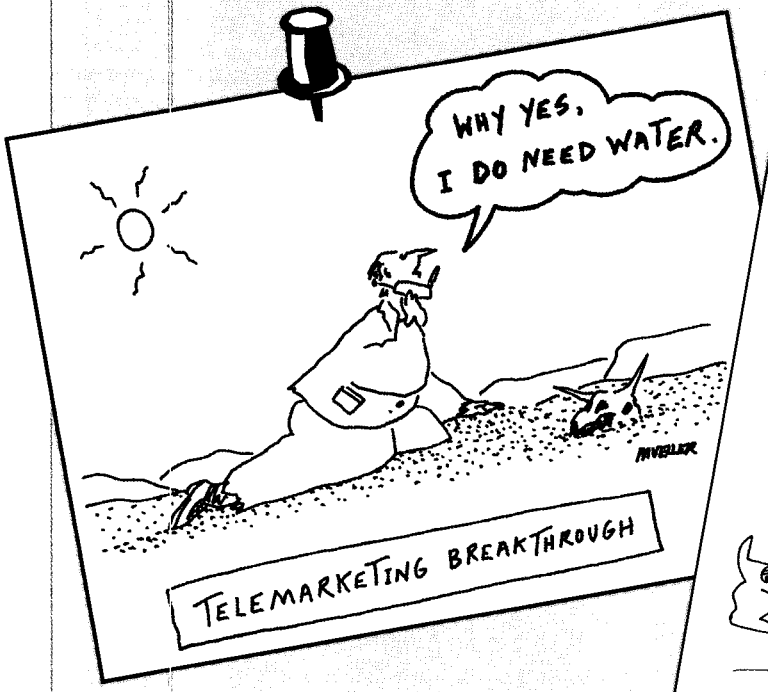

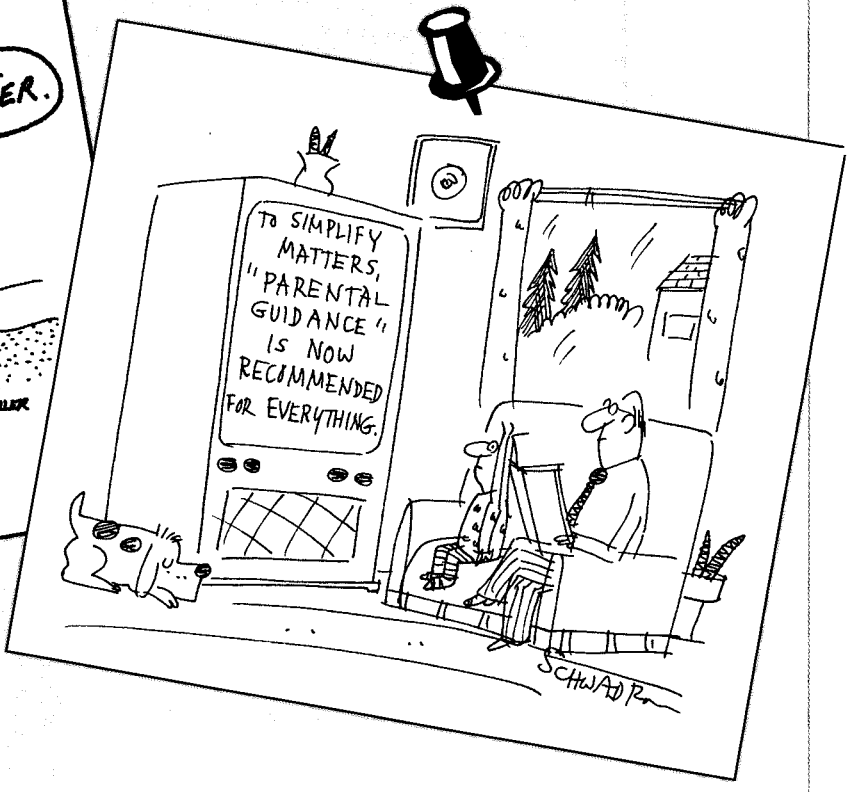

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Everyone loves Dr. Gavioli's recipe for pi.

Carefully combine pi poster contests, pi history, pi word problems, and pi jokes. Then top it all off with a pie-eating contest. That's how Dr. Mary Ann Gavioli spices up a math topic that could otherwise be dry and bland.

But Dr. Gavioli's class isn't all fun and games; her students often score in the top percentiles in math contests at the state and national level.

For cooking up innovative approaches to teaching math, State Farm is pleased to present Dr. Mary Ann Gavioli with our Good Neighbor Teacher Award™ and to donate $10,000 to Clarkstown High School South in West Nyack, New York.

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The Good Neighbor Teacher Award was developed in cooperation with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

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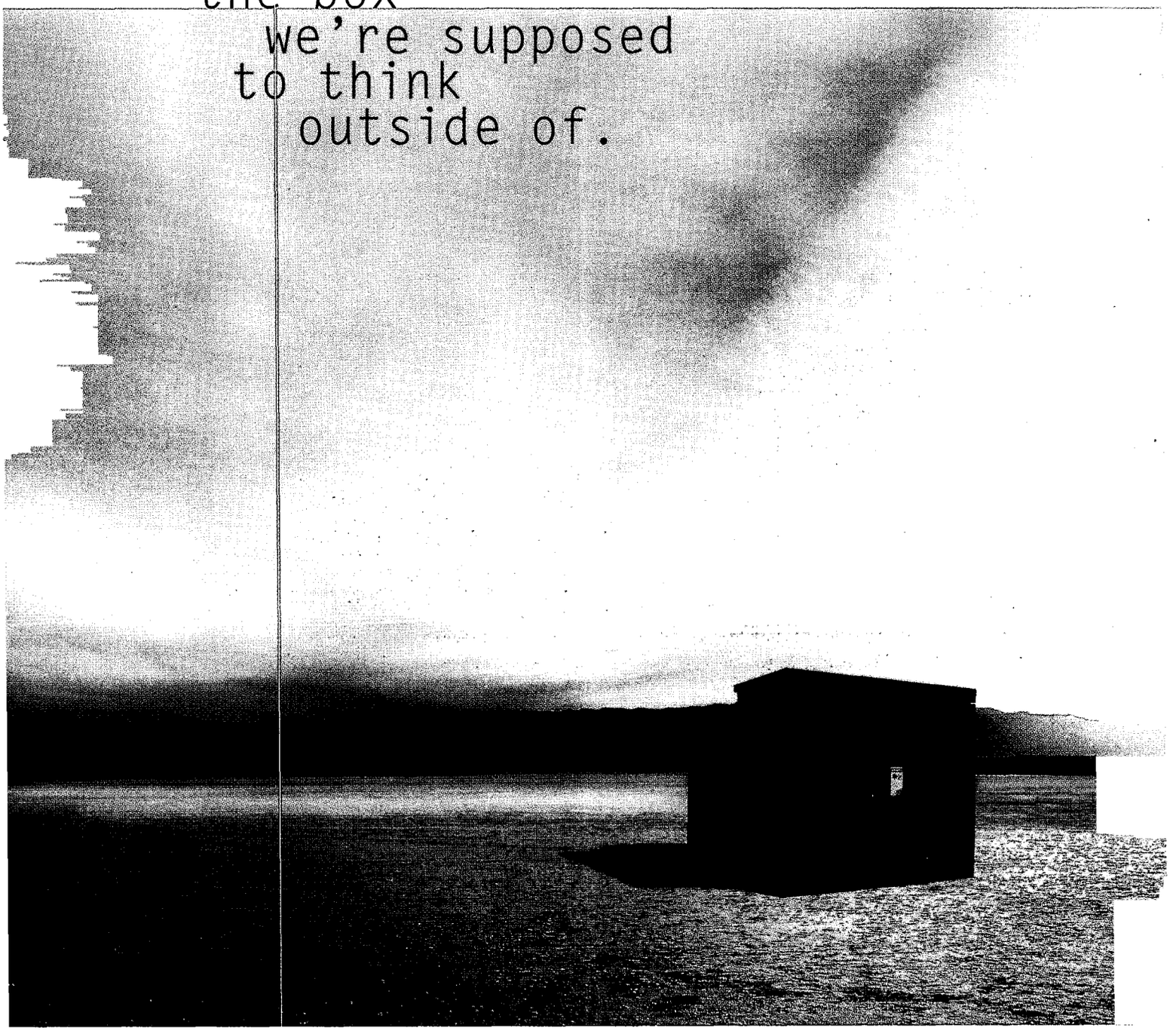
We found the box we're supposed to think outside of.



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